

THE GREAT SOUTH LAND

REX INGAMELLS

Rex Ingamells was born at Orro-roo, South Australia, in 1913. He was educated at State Schools, Prince Alfred College and the University of Adelaide. He began earning his living as a freelance journalist, private tutor and WEA lecturer in Adelaide, and later became a full-time schoolteacher there, first at Prince Alfred College and subsequently in the South Australian Education Department. In 1946, he left schoolteaching and moved to Melbourne.

His first book of verse (*Gum-tops*, Preece, 1934) was published under encouragement from John Masefield, Edward Garnett and L. F. Giblin.

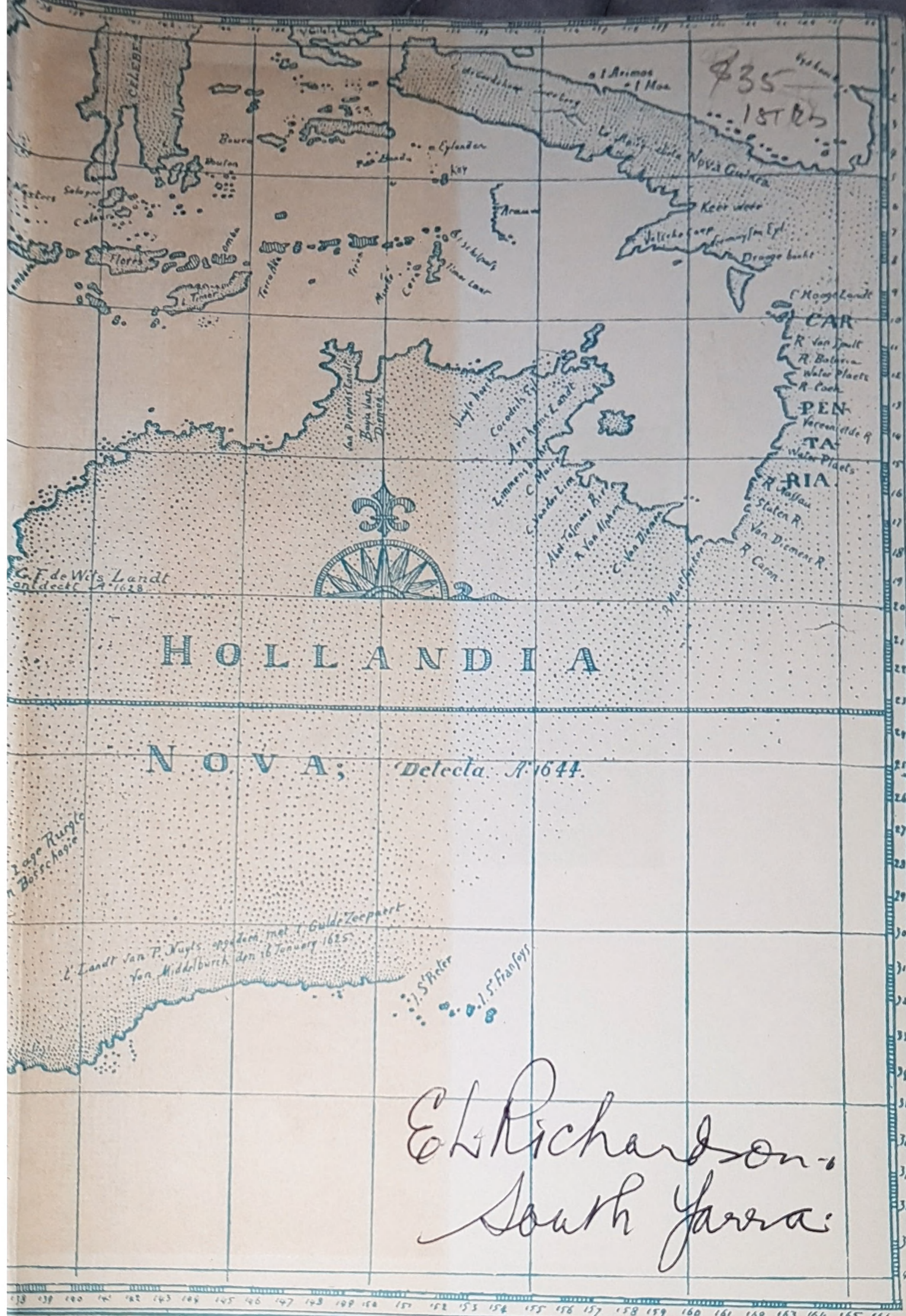
In 1938, he founded the Jindy-worobak Club, which has published an annual collection of contemporary Australian verse ever since. His own publications are many, mostly small books of verse, but a larger book, *Selected Poems* (Georgian House, 1944) is the best known.

He now has a novel at press with Hallcraft, Melbourne. His literary work is devoted to interpretation of Australian scene, life and tradition, of which matters he makes a special study. *The Great South Land*, the broadest and boldest definition of his outlook yet given, has already been examined and welcomed by a number of Australia's leading literary critics.

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35
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C.F. de Wits Landt
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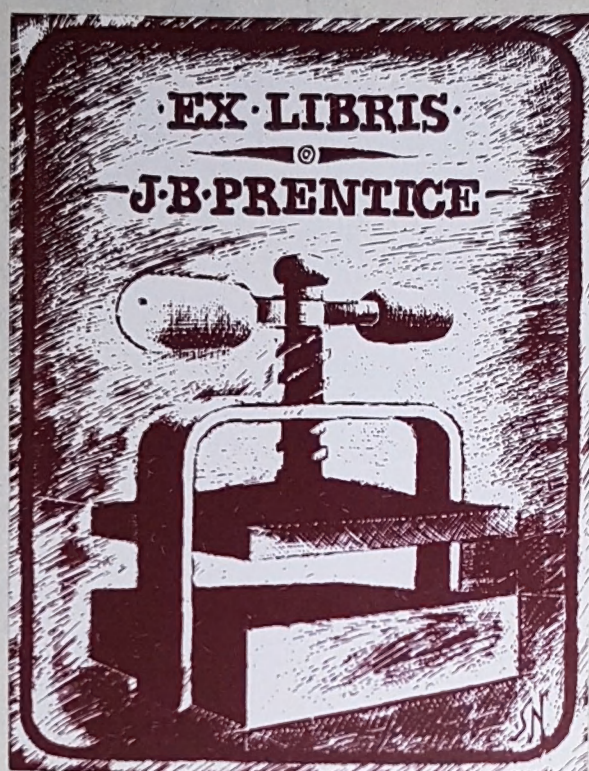
L. Landt van P. Nuyts opgeden met 1 Guldr Zeevaart
van Middelburch den 16 Januarij 1625

J. Stier
J. S. Franfons

HOLLANDIA

NOVA; Detecta A° 1644.

Ed Richardson
South Yarra



THE GREAT SOUTH LAND

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THE GREAT SOUTH LAND

An Epic Poem

BY
REX INGAMELLS



GEORGIAN HOUSE
MELBOURNE

First Published 1951

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THIS POEM IS DEDICATED
IN GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION
TO

WALTER MURDOCH

DISTINGUISHED AUSTRALIAN MAN OF LETTERS
A TRUE FRIEND TO THE AUTHOR
AND A BARRACKER
FOR THIS GENERATION

Acknowledgments

A Commonwealth Literary Fund Fellowship, awarded me for 1949, provided circumstances without which I could not have undertaken and completed this work in the period spent upon it.

Books which I have used for reference are listed as SOURCES at the back of this volume; and, where proper, the NOTES provide particular acknowledgment.

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REX INGAMELLS.

14 Toward Street,
Murrumbidgee, Victoria

4 March 1950

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Analysis

OVERTURE

Out of the fury of the white-hot Sun . . .	<i>The Cosmic Beginnings of the Earth.</i>
I am a ghost reporter now	<i>Personal Passages.</i>
My epic for this Continent must be . . .	<i>The Mystery of Man and the Universe.</i>
Now I, Australian, living in the Age . . .	<i>Civilized Man's Approach to the Great South Land.</i>
There is in Man unquenchable desire . .	<i>Man Aspiring.</i>
Do homage now in awed apostrophe . .	<i>Homage to the Ocean.</i>
Do homage to the Winds that rove the World	<i>Homage to the Winds.</i>

BOOK ONE: BEFORE MAN

There is a throbbing of the wind outside, under	<i>Abiding Power of the Primaeval.</i>
Up through long geologic Time, this Land	<i>Evolution of the Continent.</i>
Narrow the mind to mystic far perception	<i>First Austral Life.</i>
See how the birds came, following fantastic	<i>The Coming of the Birds.</i>
See how the mammals came, the monotremes	<i>The Coming of the Mammals.</i>
See how the flowers came, unique, aloof	<i>The Coming of the Flowers.</i>
The powers of Nature, steadily at work	<i>The Land acquires its present natural features.</i>
Here lay the Southern Continent, and here	<i>Associate Islands.</i>
The Ocean surged upon the Southland Coasts	<i>Ocean on the Coasts.</i>
Surely was now Alcheringa, in which . .	<i>Rise of Alcheringa.</i>

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Throughout un-numbered ages, day by day.....	<i>The Past of a People.</i>
I marvel at the spiritual Creation.....	<i>The Spiritual Creation.</i>
A thousand, thousand camp-fires every night.....	<i>The Camp-fires of the Past.</i>
Corroboree-fires cast glints upon the tides.....	<i>Corroboree-fires.</i>
Ah, Yesterday's pregnant Dreaming!...	<i>Poignance and beauty of Alcheringa.</i>
Such things awakened wonder in the hearts.....	<i>Awe of Beauty.</i>
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BOOK THREE: ANTIQUITY

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Trace now the lineaments of one Destiny.	<i>One Human Destiny.</i>
The tamarinds upon our Northern Coast	<i>Oriental Tradition.</i>
Cheng Ho, obedient to the Emperor Yung.	<i>Cheng Ho.</i>
Yamada Nagamasa of Japan.	<i>Nagamasa.</i>
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Upon a bright and burning sea, three ships	<i>Horrors at Sea.</i>
Death reaped a gruesome harvest, would have turned	<i>The Isles of the Lateen Sails.</i>
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He sought the Philippines against strong winds.....	<i>Quiros.</i>
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Behold the persistent, obstinate, stout-hearted.....	<i>Dutch Materialism.</i>
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Harden the mind in brutal and callous mood.....	<i>Mutiny.</i>
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Sometimes a wisp of spray on lonely coast.....	<i>Shreds of Tiding.</i>
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Tupia destined for a long, last voyage..	<i>New Zealand.</i>
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The Kurin-gai.....	<i>The Kurin-gai.</i>
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"We got all ready, with anchors carefully placed".....	<i>Crisis and Escape.</i>
Cook sent the boats to find a clean white beach.....	<i>At "Endeavour" River.</i>

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While Janzsoon's ghost, upon a ghostly	
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Biami, Biami . . . what do you dream..	<i>The Dreaming of Biami.</i>
There is a clanking, clanking at Sydney	
Cove.....	<i>Convicts in Sydney.</i>
This Land's strange beauty goads the	
heart's resentment.....	<i>The Land's Beauty.</i>
Consider the upas plant of alien life...	<i>Alien Life.</i>
See Governor Arthur Phillip, the benign	<i>Phillip.</i>
Here is a Nation's beginning, with	
Governor Phillip.....	<i>A Nation's Beginning.</i>
The bullock-wagons strain through	
dusty streets.....	<i>The Children.</i>
The women convicts quickly settle in..	<i>The Women Convicts.</i>
The natives watch, remote in their	
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others.....	<i>The Human Soul.</i>
The Land, the sombre, colour-flashing	
Country.....	<i>The Land Aloof.</i>
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And now the horror of the Western	
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Blaxland, Lawson, Wentworth cross the	
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Free immigrants from England feel their minds.....	<i>The Squatters.</i>
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Discovery's hard and simple formula...	<i>Personal Passages.</i>
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All you ghosts that walk this Continent.	<i>A Gathering into Legend.</i>
There is no doubt of the Conquest. Look about.....	<i>The Seals of Conquest.</i>
Here is a new tradition, sprawling and high.....	<i>A New Tradition.</i>
But Australia is more than this, is more than us.....	<i>The Land's Own Character.</i>
Sunrise and sunset have lost meaning for them.....	<i>The Land's Own People.</i>
Australia is the Timeless Land of Dreaming.....	<i>The Gradual Discovery.</i>
All things whatever now are relevant..	<i>The Grace of Ideals.</i>

THE TIMELESS COVENANT

Stand, Man, on Earth, stand up on Earth and know.....	<i>The Mortal Moment.</i>
The Stone Age Man looked up and saw a cloud.....	<i>Questing.</i>
Thought of my brain and force of my fingers come.....	<i>The Timeless Land.</i>

Overture

[*The Cosmic Beginnings of the Earth*]

Out of the fury of the white-hot Sun
flame spurted, spiralled, closed itself to be
a fiery Earth before the birth of Time,
vital component of the mind of Man,
exploring Past and Future.

Mother Earth!
what long ways you have come, what dizzy ways!

Once — scouring fierce parabolas through Space,
you pregnant then with wonders yet to be,
your vaporous and frothing elements
forebreathing rock and plant and animal,
foretelling towering cities, proof of Man —
you rolled in spasms of volcanism and hissed
chaotic steam, received the boiling rain.

10

What gigantic spitting waves of metal
would curl and crash in hurricanes of steam
which, prodigal of heat, you flung to Space!
You turned to monstrous labour for the Moon,
then, motherly, yearned to it molten tides.

When fiery seas grew sluggish, slowly crusted,
there came the cycles of the cooler rain
from tides of boiling water, steam and clouds,
until the seas grew cold between the mountains.

20

You gave a dying glow to brightening stars;
you flung but fitful signals to the Sun.

. . . And still your storms raged, but in variant mood,
primordial to life in wind and rain,
in patience of dissolving, sedimenting,
gritting and crushing, geologic heaves,
volcanic outbursts, crustal faultings, till,
most perilously in some tepid silts
and slimes at edge of ocean on the coasts
of barren lands, occurred a miracle
to populate, as myriad aeons passed,
the sea and land and sky.

30

To cast the mind
into the cloudy Past along the thin
imagining it compasses of Truth
is yet to be amazed at probables,
be stunned by silent proof, the fossil proof,
of Life — small trilobites, vast cycads, fish
that ran along the shore, amphibians
exploring coastal muds, and birds with teeth.

40

Then was there no man living to observe
the flagrant sun-flames run at evening over
such forests no man visits but in dream,
such ocean edges, such bright glaciers!
Then there was earth-life no man ever met
except in fantasy and nightmare, wrought
by dark, primaeval instinct. But the form,
the flesh, the thought, the visioning, of Man
were potent in the laboring cells of Life,
had truck with Sun and Air, with mineral,
electron — sought the Future through an instinct.

50

[*Personal Passages*]

I am a ghost reporter now

❧ + ❧

*of Man's beginnings, and record events,
knowing my own case best.*

*As I chipped at a spear-head,
a gesture of the late light's going
down the hills to the sea
transfixed in me
a passionate, glad unknowing;
and still, with wind-whisper, wave-gleam
and rock sun-red,
I wander in dream
and mystery.*

60

*Briefly I wonder at my vivid story —
how I have grown through the not minutely
chronicled ages,
how I was present, with all my kind,
at Sun-making and Earth-making, Life-living,
in eras precursing Man, before the days of Mammoth,
before fierce Sabre-tooth, before
the air-lord Archeopteryx,
before the lord of earth, great Dinosaur,
before the leviathans and reptilian dragons;
for I see myself not simply as a man walking, talking,
eating,
drinking and doing the things men do,
but, as if thinking back I find my beginnings in a
forethought,
I see myself a potential before the World was born,
a dream of fulfilment.*

70

*I have come through wonder, striving, dreaming, terror,
to this instant of some knowledge amid abysses
of things unknown and dimly, vaguely guessed;
I am a proof of Babylonia, Egypt,*

80

*Athens, Rome and London and New York;
 yet am I most primordially Australian,
 my thought following channels of mind
 Life has engineered for me —
 not my little life alone, but Life that draws deeper
 than buried Stone Ages;
 and I have found a purpose in expression,
 chosen for my soul's centre,
 out of all the dim, wild, colour-clouded scope for
 imaginings
 wrought since the World's birth,
 Alcheringa,
 the epic beauty of this Continent.*

90

Through a hammering now of hard
 explanations shall my votive poem of life run on
 unchecked.

[*The Mystery of Man and the Universe*]

My epic for this Continent must be
 an epic of Mankind, whose story keeps
 close to the land and sea and reaches back,
 back, back into the puzzling Past, and moves
 ahead to the unguessed Future; and whose nature
 derives from no plain source, but is involved
 amid eternal Paradox that yields
 conflicting clues, and in phenomena,
 within Man and without; immeasurable
 vast symbols of the Universe, and small
 familiarities of every day.

100

Life, Space, Time, Matter, Change and Destiny
 wherein a Universe . . .

Wherein a World . . .

Wherein a Creature, contingent on body and senses, 110
pursuing physical oblectation, yet
aspires to Spirit goals. . . .

Mere Man perceives
phenomena, stores up experience,
constructs his theories and assails Unknowns.
This midget, large in thinking, strives to grasp
some Ultimate Presiding Principle
within the Universe — to understand,
control, in his limitation, Natural Law
of which he is superior and slave. . . .

himself the only God and doomed to die? 120
or humble expression of Eternal Spirit
present in All Things, indestructible,
through Space, Time, Matter, Change and Destiny?

Is Life excluded from the roll of great
phenomena that shall persist conjoined?
an accident and doomed, without assurance
of resurrection by Blind Omnipotents?
Is Life a dream in void? Is mortal Man
the lone, undurable coincidence
of Spirit, Thought, Morality?

All Things 130
appear to Mind — which makes analyses,
comparisons, deductions — relative
in natural categories. Phenomena
all stand in their degrees, with opposites
of complementary essence. Distinctions are
in circumstantial disposition, viewed

as relevant to zeros, and displayed
in particular conjunctions.

Riddle is
upon the face of All Things.

What is Life?

Man is of Life, in circumstance disposed. 140
Familiar with it, he is ignorant —
so many of its conjunctions unexplored.
Bound to its qualities of Joy and Pain —
themselves as opposites in Feeling, which
may paradoxically be combined —
alive, he is opposite of dead . . . and Life
and Death are common to what state of what
phenomena observed or unobserved?

Life is an accident or a persistent?

Here is no question of opinion. 150

Wishing cannot determine, nor can thinking;
Religions are dreams of Faith. The character
of Natural Law which, in us and beyond us,
eludes our mortal grasp as Mystery,
is either soulless or instinct with Life.

Abide the questions we may not decide. . . .

Yet note them here, for they are apposite
to all that follows; and perceive, at least,
that Man is riddle with but clues for answer;
that Man is ignorant, yet strains for Knowledge; 160
mortal, yet dreams of Immortality;
product amid phenomena which veil . . .
phenomena which veil . . . and veil . . . and veil. . . .

In ignorance and desperate confidence,

Man strives for vindication of himself,
each individual according to conjunction
of Time, Place, Circumstance and inner Spirit.
Indifference is lack of interest
for or against an object; freedom from care
is delicate balance, and ephemeral; 170
intelligence is guarantee of both
strong sympathy and harnessed discontent.
Such things are basic in the human story,
involving love and hate, ambition, deeds,
despair and hope, repulsion and desire;
and indicate
the pulse of mind which governs human action,
progress, regress; they guarantee advance,
if only through remonstrance of grave error,
to understanding's reward and punishment. 180
In pupilage to Causes and Effects,
Man yet is moral, cannot be otherwise.

Man's history is good and evil both.
Good and Evil have woven through centuries
varied contrasting threads, not simply warp
and woof; variously disposed; assigned
criss-cross and parallel, tangled, askew;
not plainly sharp in differentiation — sometimes
contrasted vividly, sometimes confused;
combined in sort with superstition, knowledge, 190
wisdom, treachery, courage, hatred, love,
all qualities that mark experience
climatic to mortal conduct and endeavour.

[Civilized Man's Approach to the Great South Land]

Now I, Australian, living in the Age

of the Hiroshima bomb-blast, when my Country
seems for a while secure, although grave questions
stare up un-answered at blank-faced Destiny,
have thought these thoughts as others have before;
but they are bone and instinct in my poem,
impelling my intention to perform 200
this task of ardour, which is to present
account of Man's approach to the Great South Land:
one glorious goal of many glorious goals. . . .

Through ancient centuries and mediaeval,
it loomed, a thing of vague yet powerful legend,
the Great South Land which stands today revealed
in cartographical fact and definite knowledge.

Expect no plain and well-defined report
of searchers consecrated to the Search 210
for the Continent divined within the South;
no simple tale of one ship and another
affronting unknown oceans on a quest
to ascertain the lineaments of a Land
of Mystery and make them known to men.
There is no evidence of single aim,
uninterrupted from Antiquity,
of high-souled prophets and navigators bent
to find the Great South Land and make it knowledge.

Only a few sailed in deliberate quest
of this great Continent. The many who, 220
in venturing from European homes,
brought South the tides of European life
to Australasian regions, were intent
on other hopes, their Cathays, El Doradoes —
on Eastern Spices and on New World Gold.

Expect from me no pure and fixed devotion
to European outlook and tradition.
Product am I of them, in major part,
and of heredity I do not make
repudiation; but heredity 230
goes further back than Europe; Europe is
itself creation of the cloudy Past,
has complex origins wherein Mankind
is widely implicated. While I tell
of European progress to Australia,
I yet have sympathies, inherent, burning,
that break, like little flames and sparks from darkness,
and move and flash, as if they could, combining,
with all we have of Knowledge, make for men
one grand illumination of the Truth. 240

Here must I tell at first of Time Primaeval,
then draw much History before the eyes,
till, shining within the vast periphery
of such reports, and making their very centre,
stands, clear and beautiful, the Great South Land.

Here must I show, with love and understanding,
the character of discovered and discoverers,
or fail my purpose, find my purpose foundered
in seas of darkness, and the narrative
a windy, vagrant phantom, limping only 250
upon a mist-drawn surface, disembodied
of Truth's whole hull and superstructure, bearing
no burden of Knowledge, which should be its cargo,
into calm Judgment's warehouse for assessment.

Here do I join a quest with old-time seamen,
geographers, princes, and the uncounted host
anonymous of ordinary people,

who have been always, in their moods and needs
and characters, conditioners of History.

260

Discover here a saga of Mankind,
not of one nation only, but of many;
discover here the features of all races
that constitute Mankind, all creeds and colours,
and races in isolation and conjunction,
with characteristics opposite, conforming,
and hints of their pursuits, their pride, their greed,
their separate and complimentary natures,
all fair and tragic destinies adjusted;
discover all such matters, knowing them
come from Pre-History; and, in this saga,
discover one Continent, the Great South Land.

270

Note yet, before the complex narrative
of geographic and historic themes
appears as chronological account,
preliminaries achieved, more great conditions
and actual dominant forces that must always
breed admiration in the human soul,
and which afford strong personalities
component to this story of endeavour.

[*Man Aspiring*]

There is in Man unquenchable desire
to see beyond horizons, to essay
familiarity with things Unknown.

280

Man presses towards the land's edge, launches
into the oceans, seeks the farthest wave;
Man looks towards mountains, and he dreams; he feels
an insupportable unrest; he throws
distrains aside and rises, toiling forward

and up to soaring peaks that pierce the sky,
and, there arrived, stares forward to discern
faint landmarks in the distance; and he gropes 290
through fogs and brambles. . . . Irrepressible Man! . . .
ever advancing; proving satisfaction
transitory illusion; knowing Life
perpetual questing into vast Unknowns
for coveted prizes which are yet but dreamt.

The master-dreamers are prompters of great action;
farers themselves in high and stirring deeds;
dynamic to all Mankind, from which they draw
their nerves of inspiration, in fine madness;
giving Mankind new fires of inspiration, 300
new evidence of wonder, new-found treasure.
They are the souls whose keen imagination
cleaves close to Truth they know, to move with it. . . .
For Truth is not static, held forever in
fixed states of mind, acceptance of known conditions;
Truth is the mightiest factor in a man,
to grow or wither in him — not simply bound
together with body's growth and its decay,
but burgeoning according as his days,
environment, and Spirit will allow. 310
All great men are adventurers of Truth.

Great names . . . great names . . . mention of which
must conjure
History as drama . . . mention of which must bring
pulsing awareness of Man's quest through Time
for Knowledge and for Power . . . great names,
whose mention
uncovers quenchless springs of Destiny,
still gushing, for those who ponder, fresh surprise. . . .
Great names . . . great names . . . whose very greatness is

they never blaze aloof from common life,
 but, spelt from dull and arduous circumstance, 320
 beacon through climes and ages, shattering
 fog-banks of ignorance and apathy. . . .
 Great names, whose noblest pride is always this:
 they stand for mortals, viewed by men as gods;
 Humanity the roof and crown of greatness. . . .

Consider great names, their grand humility.

[*Homage to the Ocean*]

Do homage now, in awed apostrophe,
 to the changeless, yet the ever-varying, Ocean . . .
 salt-water girdling all the world, and scouring 330
 as clean as un-fleshed, un-marrowed bone all objects
 a-wash to its waves and tides; disintegrating,
 in yield to scavenging birds and sharks and fish,
 the flesh that rots of natural denizen
 or wallowing corpse of drowned and sightless human. . . .
 The vast and terrible Ocean, the immense,
 deep, stern expanses, heaving, swelling, breaking
 around Earth's shores; straining in Earth's deep basins,
 this way and that to the Moon; and crashing down
 on rock and sand, hurling its dusts and ropes
 of spray on headlands, beaches, cliffs and dunes; 340
 fashioning in measure the perimeters
 of continents and islands; tearing down
 and piling up the land; building, below,
 in gradual sediments, the shape of firm
 rock-strata of the ages yet to be. . . .
 The powerful salt-water, traversing,
 in tides and waves and ripples, all the world. . . .
 The Sea that drifts and sways, deep in itself,
 and shows to sky and sun and cloud and rainbow,

to star and moon and meteor and storm, 350
 its infinite and corresponding moods. . . .
 The ravening, hungry, the devouring, Ocean. . . .
 The calm and gentle, lulling, murmuring, Ocean. . . .
 The deep-dragging, and the friendly, buoyant, Sea. . . .
 The water that dreams all day by coral reefs,
 sun-warmed and flowery-bright, with emerald pools
 and elegant fish and under-water blooms. . . .
 The water that seethes along those very reefs,
 bursts over them and, rushing to the land,
 lashes and pounds beneath those very palms 360
 that water has smoothly mirrored. . . . The salt-sea
 that smiles and growls and frets and laughs and thunders;
 that crashes with ice-packs in the Frigid Zones;
 that dreams in balmy silence under stars;
 that bears the drift-weed, lifts the floating gull,
 lies lonely under the wheeling albatross,
 far-wandering frigate-bird and graceful gannet. . . .
 The Sea that moves in currents around the lands,
 bears vessels outward, homeward, and deep down,
 and sampans past the coast of Coromandel . . . 370
 The Sea, grey, green and blue, and dark and bright. . . .
 The star-reflecting, cloud-embracing Sea . . .
 the onward-rolling, white-streaked . . . Sea that burns
 with riotous dawn, flamboyant evening. . . .
 The Sea that binds the ships in calm, and harries
 in hurricane . . . that rears, in tidal wave,
 to blot out villages and leave but wrack. . . .
 The Sea that arbitrates much History,
 with Yeas and Nays to Man; that throws before him
 clear avenues for trafficking with ships; 380
 that raises obstacles, conspires with lightning
 and winds to baffle human enterprise. . . .
 The Sea that threatens, promises, cajoles;
 that helps and murders men, and cares no whit. . . .

The dominant and the indifferent Sea. . . .

[*Homage to the Winds*]

Do homage to the Winds that rove the World;
that stay not in one place; invisible,
except by signs they make in clouds, on seas,
in foliage of tree and shrub, in grass, 390
in wraiths of dust and wraiths of pelting rain;
that flutter the flags of nations, fill the sails
of ships; the Winds that Man will wait upon
for end of ocean calm, will dread when, raging
in unison of conflict with the sea
and thunder and lightning, they flap wings of terror;
the Winds that veer and change; the Winds that blow
reliably and steadily in season,
dependable for trade; the Winds that sing
and whine and howl through rigging, raising seas 400
and whipping spray in toiling sailor's faces;
the Winds that have dictated History,
as partisans in battle, and as hounds
of heat and famine to gulp and lick and sniff
all moisture from a land and leave it barren,
its mortal occupants compelled to go;
the Winds that have denied the will of captains
and forced them on to new discovery;
the Winds that harp in pine trees, rustle palms,
bring scent of wildflowers and the scent of sea, 410
drown echoes, carry voices; Winds that make
tornadoes and dust-spirals, water-spouts,
cyclones, siroccos, hurricanes; that race
in gales and loiter lazily in breezes;
the Winds that show to men all characters
and properties of strong and weak, of hot

and cold, of dry and wet, of song and discord;
the Winds that visit human homes, and rattle
the window-panes and rush along the walls;
Winds in the noon and in the dark of night;
the Winds that live with eagles in high places;
that pile up banks of snow on Everest,
raise walls of sand on the Sahara; beating,
shouting, singing, murmuring, dreaming Winds;
Winds wandering through old ruined, empty cities,
and whistling through the ribs of broken ships;
the Winds in fronds of fern, and raging blizzards;
Winds in the mountains; Winds in the troughs of sea;
Winds waking the dreams of men, abetting schemes
of daring scope and world-wide wandering. . . .

420

Now we proceed, discovering hereafter
more matter affecting Man's adventurous soul —
discovering pleasure, sorrow, pride and shame,
and an unceasing wonder, at the part
of Man on Earth, going about his business.

430

BOOK ONE

Before Man

[Abiding Power of the Primaeval]

*There is a throbbing of the wind outside, under
the stars, the vagrant blowing upon
this street and house of the gully air,
familiar with the cool friction of leaves
and the dewed hardness of rocks,
stirring memory through the five senses,
burning nostalgically, oh ghostily, into
the brain, grasping the soul with hard invisible
hands.*

*The wind controls, beating
the hands of the Present from me,
beating them back, till I rise easily
in deathless imagination of Time's
illimitable flight, the wind outside
breathing all Yesterday, and all Tomorrow,
in Yesterday's pregnant Dreaming.*

10

*Tonight is assuredly the wind's breathing
from the deep, absolute lungs of Nature's
dreaming-the-earth, exhalation
from dark strata of rocks far down
that bore primaeval succulence of growth,
the prints of Labyrinthodon feet,
the wash of the Central Sea.*

20

[Evolution of the Continent]

Up through long geologic Time, this Land

has won its way . . . through slow, successive aeons
into the vivid Present. Time, thick mist,
covering a vast of unrecorded life,
thins somewhat to our view, and we discern
conditions and shapes, some dimly, some more clearly,
of Earth as once it was in this and that 30
slow stage of evolution . . . and this Land,
the Great South Land, whose strong and rooted rocks,
deep in her continental heart, stand oldest
of all the rocks of Earth, stern, Archaeozoic,
presents strange vistas where our minds may move
with varying assurance, as the mists
of Time roll, wavering, dense or tenuous,
over primordial and primaeval features.

How inconceivably remote, those slowly
changing dispositions of sea and land, 40
through which has come the Country that I know!
. . . vast sedimenting in the deep and shallow
basins of ocean, inland sea and lake;
contorting, buckling of the land to form
high mountain ranges, and vague weathering
of these away; the furious cataclysms
that shook and split the crust of rock and soil
with sudden faults and fissures, poured their lavas
over the primal landscapes, and bombarded
the sky with ash, flame-winds and burning crags. . . . 50

O dark and fire-tongued reeling vault of heaven!
. . . so long ago, so inconceivably
remote; known of no living things except
primitive creatures trapped at ocean margins
and in old swamps and strange archaic forests.

How inconceivably remote and vast

the change of coastlines, north, south, east and west! —
large areas of plain and hill subsiding
beneath the sea or rising out of it.

Tethy awhile a-wash on Southland shores . . . 60
a mighty block of land now facing reefs
of coral in sun-warmed eastern waters . . . then
up-fold of continental land to east,
and water spread between new flanks of land
on either side, a mediterranean
that came and went and came again with Time's
advance, and finally gave up its room
to forest-ways that turned to scrub and dune.

Lost, lost is huge Gondwanaland that stretched,
for one long moment of primaeval Time, 70
across the Southern Hemisphere, gigantic
arc of a continent that strode above
Equator and embraced all subsequent
land-masses of the South in giant grip
of ice, that chilled and killed less hardy forms
of life, while its interior sprawl of coasts
enclosed the Southern Ocean's waste of waves.

Ice-ages came and went and came again! —
land-ice and floating-ice depositing 80
erratics and moraines, and riding over
valleys and crests and sea-ways, polishing,
scratching and faceting rock-pavements . . . ice,
which blanketed the south of all this Land
and other continents within the South . . .
leaving strange features, leaving record here
in ancient ground-moraines, with clays and sand,
now hardened to firm rock, inset with stones,
unsorted, of all sizes, based on pavements,
glacial-marked, of scored and polished rock.

Oceans and inland seas and glaciers;
volcanoes, earth-quakes, and more patient changes;
a myriad series of sedimentations; foldings;
roving of shorelines; building of coal deposits,
from forests swallowed by great igneous floods;
and laying down of gold-fields. . . . Out of Time,
this Land emerges with its vivid story.

90

What medleyed maze of characters appear
out of the teeming Past, in rock alone! —
conglomerates, granites, shales, and schists, and graphites;
sand-stones and slates and porphyries; intrusions, 100
dykes, bathyliths, outliers, summits, valleys;
all come from yesterdays no man may know
except as Science fathers forth vast dreams
of Knowledge that is wrought amazingly
of things abysmal in its blazing light.

[*First Austral Life*]

Narrow the mind to mystic far perception,
drill-point of consciousness to pierce the deep
rock-strata of vanished aeons, million-yearred
piled over and over again on million-yearred,
host upon host of incomputable ages 110
the mind may only guess at with its keen,
taut, flying probes of wonder, seeking Knowledge. . . .
and find somewhere, amid the rolling clouds
of vaguest definition, overlarded
with geologic heaves of Mystery,
the miracle of Life start, spark on spark,
pale hesitant friction of far Destiny
made luminous in dim instants, finding forms
we but suppose, until it could acquire,

in Time, the shapes of trilobites and sponges,
corals and gasteropods; and ganoid fish,
first vertebrates.

120

Dawn Life in vanished waters!

. . . Ah, waters teeming with fish, and shark-like creatures,
in periods so warm reef-corals throve
from Capricornia to the Arctic North. . . .
Then Arthropoda, with their jointed necks
and heavy armour, preyed voraciously
upon fantastic life less fierce and strong;
enamel-scaled Ganoidei swam where
the crinoid star-fish lifted up their points.

130

Life thriving in the waters! . . . Life that crept,
Time inconceivably remote, to land. . . .
Life creeping to the land, there taking hold
and flourishing . . . the horse-tail, Calamites,
early coniferous plants, the giant club-moss,
Lepidodendron, and, abundantly,
the massive tree-ferns, Gangamopteris
and tall Glossopteris, the many-fronded;
and sturdy evergreens
with needle-leaves, swaying in ancient forests . . .
thick cryptogamic jungles growing rank . . .
cane-trees luxuriant on higher ground . . .
all under a lonely southern sky, where dawn
and sunset flaunted birdless colour-plumes
of raw primaeval splendour, whence the rains
fell into lakes and swamps which, under stars,
held only Life's remote amphibian gestures,
and ugly sluggish reptiles in the mud;
strange croaks arising sometimes in the dark
from Labyrinthodon, and sometimes rustle

140

150

of large and stupid insects, rigid-winged. . . .

Imagine Earth then silent of bird-voices,
its grey and fiery dawns unheralded
by singing and chatter from the glades of green,
whose foliage whispered and rasped in solitude,
with only slow amphibians and reptiles,
insects, and sun, moon, wind, rain, stars, the day
and night, to know them. . . .

Imagine Earth
devoid of flowers, or boasting but beginnings —
half-hearted blooms, without the scent and colour
of later ages. . . . 160

Let the probing mind
observe the changing facies of the Past —
Glossopteris and Gangamopteris
fainting and failing in the march of Life . . .
now cycads, ferns and Gingko trees abounding;
crustaceans legion in fresh-water lakes
that rolled their massive sheets twelve hundred miles
from east to west, eight hundred north to south,
with vegetation all about their margins;
Ceratodus, the mud-fish, in the lakes; 170
with huge herbivorous Dinosaur, gigantic
reptilian blunderer through extensive swamps.

Long, long ago, a hundred million years . . .
then warm and damp among the giant mosses
of swamp and sea-shore, clung the drifting mists
swathing the palms and tree-ferns, making a maze
of greenery at mud and water margins,
where Life spawned in its riotous profusion;
with giant dragon-flies, their wings a-quiver,

poising, darting; the long and snake-like neck
of Rhoetosaurus writhing above the trees, 180
the woody and succulent forests of those times,
eyes gleaming, alert with apprehension, while
he heaved his cumbrous bulk with crash and squelch
to the water's brink, great harmless, blundering,
leaf-eating Rhoetosaurus, stupid, slow,
a prey to monstrous lizards, whose teeth and jaws
ripped him and tore him from the van of Life.

A hundred million years ago . . . observe
Diprotodon and Euryzygoma pounding 190
clumsily through the verdant Inland . . . watch
the Kronosaurus, huge aquatic lizard,
scavenging in the ancient Central Sea,
plunging his terrible form which lashed the water,
making it seethe and hiss as he left the surface,
plumbing through depths to prey on lesser giants,
tearing great mouthfuls with gigantic jaws,
so that the waters reddened as he followed
and gorged his victims in a gloom of blood.

Narrow the mind to far perception, still 200
in times so inconceivably remote
there was no man upon the Earth . . . Behold
the coming of the Southland birds and mammals,
the coming of the fragrant coloured flowers. . . .

[The Coming of the Birds]

See how the birds came, following fantastic
reptiles with wings; following such ungainly
bat-winged, squeaking creatures as showed claws
at wing-joints; and, like these, beak-growing birds

came first with teeth. . . . Then, out of Time, the birds
came flaunting feathers, flaunting colours, cries 210
turned to an endless gamut of sweet song,
and harsher calls that yet have wonder in them;
the world of twittering, whistling, screeching birds
that filled the Southland skies and forest leaves
with ecstasy of air-life, and the swift,
slow, graceful, darting, hovering, of flight.

[The Coming of the Mammals]

See how the mammals came, the monotremes,
marsupials, bats and rodents, coming after
the slow convulsions of the Earth, which shredded 220
the mighty waters of the Inland Sea
for sun and burning winds to dissipate,
and isolated all the Austral Land
from continental masses to the north
and east and west. . . . See how the mammals followed
the weakening of older vertebrates,
amphibians and reptiles, lumbering lost
and hopeless in a changing Land which bogged
them, held them fast for death, amid the muds
of dwindling saline waterholes and springs.

[The Coming of the Flowers]

See how the flowers came, unique, aloof 230
from all the blossoms of the Northern world;
flowers, flourishing and finding myriad forms
in tree and bush and grass — the flowers that flamed,
flamboyant, in the scrublands, or appeared,
modest and rare and beautiful, with mild

and delicate faces shaded under leaves. . . .

The brush and jungle plants, that superseded
the ferns and cycads of the tropic ages,
found, with return of hardier conditions,
rich soil in their selected habitats 240
from York to Otway in the torrid north;
straight-limbed tall trees, and creepers, bearing flowers
to hide among the dark and deep-green leaves. . . .

See how the flowers came throughout the Bush
which covered most of this great Continent,
vast plains and hills of eucalypt and shrub,
acacia and rich florescent growths,
where burned, in season, white and scarlet blossoms,
and golden mists of springtime . . . the unnumbered
varieties and tints of tea-tree flowers, 250
pea-flowers and banksia blooms and waratahs,
gee-bungs and woody-pears . . . the riotous
and pristine beauty of the Southland flowers!

[The Land acquires its present natural features]

The powers of Nature, steadily at work
through patient Time, in splendid isolation,
confirmed the Land's formations, and disposed
conditions of plain and hill and scrub and river,
uniquely, with features that so strongly mark,
in fair distinction of primaeval beauty,
no other Land of Earth. The Great South Land, 260
before Man's advent here! . . . in ages when,
through other countries, far beyond the sea,
bloody-hungry beasts, the Sabre-tooth, the Tiger,
Mammoth and Wolf and Bear, made war on Man. . . .

No other land was lovelier than this;
and here were most of peace and least of fear,
the fairer striving of gentler animals.

Here in this Land beneath the Southern Cross —
where, southward, tireless Ocean rolled upon
the Bight; where, northward, Arafura surged, 270
surged into Carpentaria; where, eastward,
shouted the huge Pacific; while, to west,
the Indian Ocean battered night and day —
here in this Land, surrounded by the sea,
was Solitude's domain for untold ages.

Here, out of Time, evolved the great Red Centre,
with flat-topped hills and monodocks and scarps,
great bulks of solid rock of mountain-size,
and sharp-backed ranges, hazing in mirage, 280
with gaps where summer floods seethed, turbulent,
to sink away across the brooding plains.

Here, out of Time, evolved the river system
that nourishes the eastern areas —

the Murray and associated streams,
their mightier beginnings deep in Time.

Here, out of Time, evolved the grey, green, brown,
far-spreading bushland, where the sun and moon,
and clustering stars, and wind and rain and dew,
came in their due successions out of heaven 290
to bless the soil and plant and animal.

The dawns and sunsets came, in myriad moods
of flaming colours that lit up the sky
with fires of cloud; or came with quiet hues
of pink and gentle gold . . . and shining stars
and moon walked in the heavens, night by night,
spreading a tranquil radiance over all
the dreaming vastness of the hills and plains,

the scrublands, waving grasslands and thick jungles;
seeping their tender lights into the gullies,
glinting on dew-wet crest-lines of the ranges; 300
silhouetting scarp and tree, and gleaming
in lustrous gloom of eyes of gentle beasts,
soft-footed in the night-time, cropping leaves
and drinking at the waterholes and creeks;
while crickets and cicadas, shrill and strident,
threaded the dreaming hours of dark with song.

Now kookaburras, stirring in the night,
among creek-gums, would suddenly burst forth
with urgent tidings, protestations, glee,
cacophonously shattering the quiet, 310
that would come surging back, the outcry ended —
not ended, for, before reverberations
completely died, the birds would once again
deny a calm composure to the night,
their wild calls pulsing, throbbing far and wide,
drawing responses from another gully,
and from another, till the bush was swept —
trunks, branches, foliage, shrubs — in one on-rush
and all-consuming crescendo-flood of noise.

The dawn walked, golden, on the golden mountains; 320
the Sun strode high in heaven through the noon;
the great red kangaroo thumped on the plain. . . .
Parrots and cockatoos and eaglehawks
innumerable, filled Southland skies with flash
and song and raucous screech. . . . The bush bore
flowers. . . .

The fire of waratah burned, fierce and lovely;
the fire-wheel tree, the flame-tree, flowering gums,
and kangaroo-paw, took their proper places. . . .
The winds bore scent of wild boronia,

and eucalypt breathed sweetly through the Land.

330

[Associate Islands]

Here lay the Southern Continent, and here,
associate with it, fair adjacent islands.

Who shall ascribe remoteness from Australia
to isles of the Torres Strait, or Papua,
to Thursday Island, Melville, Milingimbi,
Groote Island, islands of the Barrier Reef?

— or who repudiate those barer islands
upon the Western Coast, Dirck Hartog's, Rottneest,
the grim Abrolhos, scavenger of ships?

340

These all are one with this great Continent
by roots of rocks and roots of circumstance,
as is that Isle of Mountains, on whose peaks
snow lies perpetually or in its season;
whose fair lakes mirror the blue or cloud-race sky
and heaven-assailing summits of massive mountains,
blue peak beyond blue peak, abrupt and grand. . . .

The beautiful Island which has everywhere
strong mountains visible . . . the Isle of Mountains,
whose cataracts and rivers leap and move
in pride of strength and tree-fringed loveliness;
whose wild fern-vales and hillsides smile with green;
whose lofty fiords shock to Southern Ocean
and cold grey winds from distant Polar seas. . . .

350

Bold Tasman's Isle, one with the Great South Land
in geologic Time, one with it still,
though, rived by seas to insular dignity,
standing a space removed. . . . The Isle of Mountains,
united deep in the Past, and one today,
with the Great South Land, in comprehensive beauty.

[*Ocean on the Coasts*]

The Ocean surged upon the Southland coasts, 360
pounding its rollers on granitic rocks,
of capes and bays and tiny jutting headlands;
crashing upon, to drench with flying sprays,
the piled-up sea-weeds and the mounting dunes;
rushing upon the land in rising tides,
and dragging at it with strong undertows;
murmuring sometimes softly in small ripples,
crooning and chanting to the smooth, white beaches;
whispering, sighing, in and out of mangroves;
echoing in the limestone coastal caves; 370
frothing and fuming, shouting, in deep blow-holes;
washing about the long, rude, rugged shores,
in solitude, before the days of Man. . . .

[*Rise of Alcheringa*]

Surely was now Alcheringa, in which
arose the Tribes of Men, with Brotherhoods
of bird and beast and tree and flower, with star
and stone and Sun and water. . . . Surely now
were all things realized, in their degrees,
by Biamee, Kiama, and cult-heroes,
Sky-heroes and Earth-heroes of the Land, 380
and all the mighty ancestors of Man,
enduring, deathless, in the Tribal Legends,
and Sacred Ceremonies, through golden Time
observed in every corner of the Land. . . .

While the black Tasmanians, discovering
their Spirit-land, rose in the Isle of Mountains,
surely Alcheringa, which ever was,

even from the Beginning, now assumed
its human characters, in fair accord
with life on mainland mountain-ridge and plain.

390

BOOK TWO

The Aborigines

[*Aboriginal Relics*]

They came, they came, the brown Dravidian people,
to the oldest Land of the world, when the world was
young;
drove the Negritos to the Isle of Mountains,
but not without some interbreeding first
to leave its mark upon the Continent
after the separation of the races.

Let learned anthropologists, who teach
the truth as far as it is ascertained,
sift further probabilities and doubts
regarding facts primaeval, so-long-buried
in times all unrecorded but for flints,
rock-galleries, cave-paintings and old skulls.

10

Within discussion and beyond discussion,
we know the certainty of power and wonder
in ancient Dreaming, as we gaze upon
resplendent Lightning Brothers, Rainbow Serpent,
surviving though the Tribesfolk have departed,
and sacred pictures on Mootwingec rock
and on the rock of Panaramittee.

Awe surges in my soul when I observe
the relic hands on Sydney sandstone, bidding
grave speculation whether fraught with meaning
or evidence of idle entertainment.

20

My heart is called to mystic sympathy
before old burial trees and bora-grounds,
and when my hands take hold of sacred objects,
the tjurunga and ceremonial shields

the waninga and ochred spears and clubs.

Such evidence, whatever argument
and supposition and hair-fine distinction
are properly involved for definition,
is instinct and occult with living spirit,
impressive, potent, in imagination
beyond the yesterdays which gave it birth;
such evidence is proof of reservoirs
of spirit power, so ample as to send
eternal impulse into distant ages
of altered circumstance and alien feature.

30

I trample twigs beside old broken wurlies,
along the Murray River, Millewa,
and in the Country of the scattered Djuan,
the Country of the Kogara, the Countries
of Euhalayî and of Narrinyeri,
of vanished Yeidji, Bibulmun and Kabi,
and other wandering Tribes that leave their names.
I stand amid the red Aranda gorges
and conjure up the age-old legends, known
at camp-fires of the Past; I tread today
the culture-paths whereon the ancestors
of Waramungas moved in the Beginning;
and everywhere I gaze on hills and valleys
and plains and creeks and billabongs and rocks
that all have stories of Creation to them.
Oh, Countries loved by the forgotten people! . . .

40

50

I breathe the sad romance of days gone by,
with tenderest appreciation; brood
amid the ancient places of tradition;
from east to west, from north to south, discover,
inalienable and part of every scene,

the Tribal ghosts, forever wandering here. . . .

60

[*The Past of a People*]

Throughout un-numbered ages, day by day,
the tireless hunters exercised their skill,
stalking the kangaroo and wallaby,
the emu and wild turkey, with the spear,
the boomerang and club; they pounced upon
the blind marsupial mole, the bandicoot,
the python, climbed the trees for possums, robbed
the bird's nest and the hive of bushland bees;
they trapped the fish at low-tide in their weirs,
or speared them in the estuaries and lakes;
they sank into the billabong, took breath
through reeds, and swam to drag the wild duck under.

70

The lubras gathered yams with digging sticks;
found lily-bulbs that throve in billabongs;
sought, revelling, sweet-tasting honey-ants;
joyfully captured fat and juicy grubs;
plucked myriad bushland berries in their seasons,
and quondongs and wild plums; and stooped at dawn
upon the grey, wet beaches, taking crabs
and shell-fish to be cooked in coals and ashes;
they pounded nardoo for the nardoo cakes. . . .

80

The Tribesfolk lived with prowess, senses keyed;
they read the signs of Nature freely, showed
uncanny powers of tracking in the bush;
they sent their wild, exhilarating coo-ees
shrilling and echoing across the valleys,
ringing across the deserts and the plains.

[*The Spiritual Creation*]

I marvel at the spiritual Creation,
dream how it was accomplished, details told
at nomad-fires by legend-loving people, 90
and re-enacted in the sacred dance —
how Craitbull and his wife, the Booandiks,
bent low their heads to pass beneath tall gums,
and came to Berrin, now Mount Gambier,
making an oven there, in which arose
the Blue Lake water, putting out the fire . . .
how one bold Euhalayî youth would joke
improperly and changed into a star,
brightest of all the sky, the Laughing Star, 100
forever grinning at the jokes he made . . .
how, as Aranda greybeards still relate,
the pmoara flood of honeysuckle juice
poured, in a torrent bearing shrubs and trees,
across the plain to far Ilbalintja
and overwhelmed Karora and his sons . . .
how wounded Kondole of the Narrinyeri,
speared from behind and in the neck, rushed down,
in agony, from camp-site to the sea —
the roving Whale that throws up waterspouts. . . .

Every part and corner of this Land 110
was celebrated, rich in ancient store
of hallowed Myth and Ceremonial;
and still the wondrous aura of the Past
clings to each landmark, though it be deserted
of Tribal festival for evermore.

At gap and waterhole, by creek and sea,
in gullies and on ridges, on the plains,
in bushland and in desert, Totems gathered

to honour their momentous Past, and so
preserve, perpetuate, the Life within them.

120

Came droughts; and sometimes came the rare, fat
seasons,
when Tribes would come together in one place
of bounteous bunya nuts or plenteous yams . . .
and always, whether time was for rejoicing
or hard and bitter travail, all their days
the Tribesfolk lived in sure co-operation,
their ways instinct with true authority
to which the individual added power.

Authority inhered in ancient Myth,
re-lived in ceremonial and dance,
observed in Increase rites, and rites wherethrough
Initiates would enter gradually
the Secret Life, become the guardians
of sacred objects and the Totem stories.

130

The Old Men, wise in years, whose character
in service of the Tribe the years had proved,
administered the people's destiny. . . .
In droughts, when waterholes were dry, lands barren,
and wild things of the bushland few to find,
they knew what precious sustenance remained
to human beings in the Tribal Country,
in which creek-sands to dig, what roots to cut,
that moisture might be won for parching throats,
where yams, however poor, might be discovered,
and to what rocky corner of the range
the pining euro might, with desperate effort,
and ruthless perseverance, be pursued.

140

Australia, Continent of no relaxed

and easy golden age, but rather fraught
with struggle for its dark inhabitants,
was yet a place of peace, with rich reward
and benison of spirit. Patriotism,
while deeply rooted in the Land, eschewed
by its religious and superb intent,
all covetous regard for territory
between the Tribes; and all the Tribal Lands
were sacred to their owners, sanctity
so far observed — from Kurnai of the South
to Worgait in the North, from Karadjeri
towards the Western Coast to Kabi where
Pacific rollers beat — that enmities
could not involve the fear of subjugation,
and came from lesser matters of dissension.

150

160

Life Forces which sustained each Tribe belonged
inalienably to the Tribe's own Country,
hallowed in Legend. Every landmark had
its mythical Creator; every Tribe,
in all its ways of living proved a complex
and intricate community of Spirit.

170

All things of Nature, human and otherwise,
animate and inanimate, had due places
assigned within Totemic Brotherhoods.

The Tribesfolk honoured still their ancestors,
the supernatural beings, who, at will,
assumed their Totem forms
of bird and beast and flower and butterfly.
Rocks, ridges, waterholes and ancient trees
contained the vital essences of gods.

All Nature was, in this philosophy,
one vast extended family of Spirit,
immense and sacred Brotherhood of Being.

180

[*The Camp-fires of the Past*]

A thousand, thousand camp-fires every night,
in ages gone, would twinkle to the dark
from crest and valley in the rolling bush,
from mulga scrub and mallee scrub, from dunes
of Central sand, from gaps in straggling ranges,
from gibber plains and plains of iron-wood,
through leaves and in the open, from the mangroves
by shores of Carpentaria, from rocks
and beaches of the Bight. . . . For countless aeons, 190
a thousand, thousand camp-fires burned each night,
and, by the fires, the Old Men told the tales
which held their listeners spell-bound. . . . Every night,
among the fires, men chanted to the beat
of stick and boomerang and clap of hands,
or drone-and-boom of didgeridoo, the songs
rising and falling, trailing, quickening,
while eyes gleamed bright through smoke-drift, bodies
shone
and dusked in fitful glow amid the shadows . . .
and, every night, a thousand, thousand camps 200
echoed with laughter and the sallyings,
the jokes and repartee of simple folk
whose hearts sang in a perfect tune with Nature. . . .

[*Corroboree-fires*]

Corroboree-fires cast glints upon the tides
of Arafura on the Northern Coast,
and licked with light the red MacDonnell gaps,
and ran in pools of colour on the dim
dry sands of creek-beds in the Flinders Ranges;
corroboree-fires burned in a thousand places;
the chants swelled in a thousand dialects, 210

on windy plains and under gully boulders,
at tree-fringed rivers and at sandy soaks,
beneath the stars and moon, or stars alone,
or compress of the sky-obscuring clouds. . . .

Corroboree-fires blazed up and lit the writhen,
bark-trailing trunks of Millewa eucalypts. . . .
Millewa. . . . Stars-in-the-Water. . . . The water, speaking
night-long to sand-bars, cliffs and mud-banks, took
the twinkle of stars and leaping tongues of flame
into its shining darkness, bore the chants 220
of Totemites far up and down the reaches . . .
and birds in bushland, startled out of sleep,
made noisy protest, swelling the frenzied din
of the stamping and quivering files of shouting men. . . .
Millewa. . . . Stars-in-the-Water. . . . Millewa, where
the Totems gathered for ceremonial;
where Old Men sat in Council, as elsewhere
in all the Tribal Countries, and decided
each question in unanimity. . . . Old River
of Legend, River of myriad camps 230
whose tales derive from dim Alcheringa. . . .

[Poignance and Beauty of Alcheringa]

Ah, Yesterday's pregnant Dreaming!
Alcheringa, holding all things, walling with vigour
the lungs of Nature's breathing, holding all Time
in unstraining embrace, holding the camps,
the battles, the frivolities, the huntings,
the feastings, the sleepings, the dawn-awakenings,
the night-corroborees, the gay and the sad eyes,
the joy and the travail,
of the Dark People. 240

*I am their watching of sunset over the billabongs,
 dawn-flare in the mountains, in sand-hill solitude,
 among the gibbers and beside the sea;
 I am their listening to the leaf's word
 in the mulga country and the gum country, to the
 wave's sound
 on the long, long coast of rock and cliff and dune;
 my ears ring
 with the agony of unheard coo-ee in the mountains;
 my eyes mist at the late light's going,
 galah-hued, into deserted coastal cliff and sand, 250
 and at the parrot-flush of sun-rise, flaunting
 above the inland ranges. . . .
 The Land's Forgotten People have returned
 to shatter my smug exterior of cities,
 clutch on my heart with strong and gentle fingers;
 the Children of the Dream-Time claim my soul,
 live for me in the Nature that they knew. . . .*

*Beauty I wonder at they wondered at —
 raw colours of earth, of plain and garish range
 beneath the blazing sun; the rampant tints 260
 of sun-up in the valley-mists, flamboyant
 upon the peaks and bushland foliage;
 the opalescent tides of sun-down, drenching
 dry ways of rivers through vast barren lands,
 and swelling the lambent light of flowing creeks;
 the vivid sparks of birds against the clouds;
 the whistling and screeching of swift birds at dawn;
 the monotone of ocean on the sand,
 its battering against great granite headlands;
 the quiet, steadfast gazing of the stars 270
 upon the restless bush where boobooks call,
 and lively possums scamper on the branches;
 the eucalyptus-laden winds, the breath*

of sweet boronia and golden wattle;
 the beauty of high mountain panoramas;
 the loveliness of orchids, butterflies,
 and dew-light shimmerings on midnight rock;
 vast waves of silence, filling solitudes;
 the paeaning of thunder-storms, unloosed
 upon the rooted mountains and the plains;
 the euros, with soft eyes and pricking ears,
 that venture down from stony hills to drink
 at rock-holes under starlight; all the wild,
 quick-moving creatures of the bushland night,
 the bandicoots with crinkling snouts, jerboas,
 rat-kangaroos, pouched mice and nosing moles;
 the fruits and flowers and seeds, the bark, the grass,
 of fertile lands and inhospitable;
 all day and night; the warming rays of sun;
 the casual stir of wind and lift of leaves;
 the crowding in of darkness; and the drop
 of fluttering feather from a fleeting bird. . . .

280

290

[*Awe of Beauty*]

Such things awakened wonder in the hearts
 of brown folk of the dawn-times underneath
 the spreading Southern sky . . . and Stone Age Man
 was, in this Land, companioned all his days
 by wondrous awe of Beauty, rife in Nature;
 rabid in burning deserts; never absent;
 present throughout the Land in varying moods. . . .
 Beauty, a benison within the soul,
 born often out of harshness, Beauty rich
 to eye and ear and heart, its import driven
 hard home to human spirits by the bold
 and calloused hands of Nature, summer-burned

300

and sand-chafed, dragged and torn upon
the bare red summits and the dried, miraged
and empty waterholes, parched earth of famine.

[*Hardihood and Character*]

Australia spread before her dusky people
no life of luxury and dreamy ease.

Here Idleness could not lift languid fingers
to pluck the ready, ripe, superfluous fruits
that make for obese bodies and sleek minds,
lissom in sweet sophisticated fancies. . . .

310

Seldom was Nature lavish in Australia
beyond a short, fat season, soon to pass;
and famine was as frequent as was plenty.

A normal season called forth every ounce
of energy for living off the land:

water and fruit and animals were scarce
and scattered through large areas, sufficient
for hardy faring, not won easily,
each district soon denuded of its food,
and desert waters needing conservation. . . .

320

The walkabout was not a racial whim,
but habit born of hard necessity:
men had to roam to live . . . and every habit,
each custom of the Tribes, each superstition,
was somewhere based, with an uncanny vision,
on Natural Must, this Land's imperative.

Prescription in food and marriage guaranteed
rigid control, for Tribal good, of factors
which statesmen, churchmen and economists
inveigh about today, with poor effect,
to nations whose morality is less
religious than convenient. . . .

330

What need
had Aborigines of moral suasion,
when in their hearts and minds they lived their Law?
What need had they of European modes
in manners and in morals? Nature made
decrees which they, in their perceiving, honoured

340

Australia gave her people toil and travail,
through which to win necessities of life;
required unceasing quest and strong endeavour;
wrought discipline of spirit as of body;
so mothered forth a great philosophy,
enshrined in immemorial tradition,
conceived by nomad people out of need,
and proved and hallowed in experience
through slow, successive Time . . . a view of life
in which the individual observed
the good of all, in which the Tribal cause
assigned each individual a part
and share in common fortune and distress . . .
a view of life in which all privilege
was fruit of service rendered to the group;
and duty recognized, devoutly honoured;
and punishment impartial, under Law
that favoured no wrong-doer for his rank,
but ranged the Tribe in unison against
unsocial acts . . . a view of life in which
to waver was sacrilege, and Justice had
sanction of Myth. To desecrate the Law
was to outface a fervour of conviction
that was religious, rooted in the Totems
all through the legended, un-numbered ages.

350

360

Daily, through legended, un-numbered ages,
suiting their ways to Nature, nomad people

wandered and hunted in their little groups
upon vast areas, and proved themselves,
in character and custom, in the hard
travail of life, intelligent and moral,
courageous and happy in their disposition,
lovers of children, honouring grey hairs,
respecters of Law, trained in co-operation,
unselfishness, good-humour, piety.

370

[*Primaeval First Discovery*]

Look now on the Great South Land, whose people
hunted
daily for food, and nightly told their tales,
slept in bark shelters and beneath the stars. . . .

Look on the Great South Land, refulgent, bright
in its own strong white light or coloured skies,
or imperturbable beneath the stars,
its own stars, legended — the Southern Cross
and great wide river of the Milky Way. . . .

380

Look on the Great South Land. For it no veils
exist to hide life's truth. Beyond is no
concern at all, and here is all desire.
Earth is no mystery unto itself.

Here broods the wonder of Alcheringa.
The Sun draws hair-string pendants over her eyes,
for rest from toil, and Oh, intenser Dreaming. . . .

390

*Ponder we must upon Alcheringa —
Alcheringa, by whatever names denoted
from Tribe to Tribe of Aborigines —*

*the far-off Dream-Time, still immediate,
imperishable and not to be belied,
persisting even in the wandering wind,
although the Tribes are dead, their hunting grounds
transformed to different life or rendered barren.*

*Alcheringa is this Land's very soul,
its bold and subtle essences imbue
Australian scenes forever, constitute
a bright allure and stern hypnotic power;
it is the breath of sacred Yesterday,
with import for Today and all Tomorrow,
proof of primaeval first discovery,
by nomad people, of the Great South Land,
and how to live with it, in harmony
of arduous enterprise, the life of good.*

400

*Afar, geographers conjecture. Veils
for them are thick, impenetrable. The Sun,
dropping her hair-string pendants, covers the Land
with shadow and mystery from all without.*

410

BOOK THREE

Antiquity

[*Voices of the Past*]

Through swirling mists of Time, through colour-clouds
of dim Antiquity, move phantom shapes,
prophetic images, and, babel-tongued,
sound ghostly voices omening the Future. . . .

Sometimes the earnest student may attend
on scenes recorded vividly, may catch
the fateful import of an age long dead,
find in his searching heart immediate meaning
of written word and human utterance
contemporary to past millenia . . . 10
in old Chaldea in the days of Ur;
in Babylon and Nineveh and Tyre;
in ancient Egypt when the Pyramids
stood, proud and dazzling, in their first construction;
along the Red Sea Coasts; along the Gulfs
of Persia and Arabia; beside
the Indus Delta; all along the shore
of India; in old Malay and Java;
on seas and coasts of China; in the waters
and harbours of the Mediterranean Sea; 20
and out beyond the Gates of Heracles
to waves of the Atlantic.

Swirling mists
of colour-clouded, ghostly-eloquent
Antiquity seep through the mind's keen nerves
and crevices, wherein Imagination
stores more than half the truth of History,
and give to evidence of proper sort
conviction — pulse and flesh and breath of life.

. . . The learned men of lost Chaldea push
their finger-nails across the diagrams,
baked into clay, to point the all-enclosing
Okeanos, that River circumfluent,
in their assumption, to the lands of Earth.
“The ship of Ea — it was seen,” says one:
“A merchant, reaching Eastern Libya. . . .”

30

. . . Necho of Egypt, he who is a God,
instructs Phoenicians, if report be true:
“Sail South, then North, around the Libyan shore. . . .”
— and, after many months have passed away,
and many, many leagues been voyaged over,
those pilots mark the Sun in strange position. . . .

40

. . . Come shouts of Indian sailors, loading spices
in the Moluccas, on a sweltering day
of far Antiquity: “Heave . . . heave!”

“The job
is nearly done. . . .”

“Tonight with the monsoon. . . .”

The voices of the Past are in the waters
that wash the Indian Peninsula.
Chaldeans, Arabs, Asiatic Greeks,
Persians, Phoenicians, Chinese, Indians,
cry from the Past that trade is brisk and good.

50

[*Ancient Trading in the Orient*]

Thousands of years before Columbus crossed
Atlantic waters or Magellan sailed
upon the vast Pacific, seas about

the Indian Peninsula knew traffic
in goods and culture, carried on between
the Indus Valley and the far Levant,
between the Persian and Arabian ports
and those which lay in Southern India.

The Obelisk of Shalmanesa shows
the presence in the Valley of Euphrates,
in ancient times, of Indian elephants.

60

To Ptolemy Philadelphus came the spice
of India by swaying camel-train
from landing-stages; and, in his procession,
were lovely Indian women, long ago.

Ancient Egyptians carried on a trade
with Arabs, Ethiops and Red Sea people.
Perfumes, ivory, precious woods, wild beasts,
were freighted into Egypt by canal;
and, during Roman occupation, still
there flourished transit traffic. Goods were stored
at Alexandria and Pelusium —

70

endless variety of merchandise
which Rome bought from the East; sleek Ethiop salves,
lethargic eunuchs, monkeys, brilliant parrots,
required for ladies' boudoirs; Nubian lions,
lithe leopards from Afghanistan, and tigers
from Punjab, for the Roman circuses;
and many coveted commodities
from the Golden Isles set in the Bengal Sea.

80

[*The Phoenicians*]

Brave deep-sea venturers were the Phoenicians,
Semitic folk, who, settling on the shores

of Mediterranean in ancient time,
built Tyre and Sidon, whence they traded far
to Greece and Italy, and out beyond
Gibraltar to the Scilly Islands, taking,
wherever they went, the figures of calculation,
and writing of Sumerians, simplified
as basis for the Roman alphabet.

The lithe Phoenicians were the lords of trade.
They were the carriers for many nations,
becoming masters of commodious harbours
in the Arabian Gulf, whence they pursued
commercial enterprise with India
and Eastern Africa. . . . They landed cargoes
at Elath, safest of the Red Sea ports,
despatching them by Land to Rhinocolura
for voyaging to Tyre.

90

Earth's garnered wealth
passed into Europe through Phoenician hands;
and these Phoenicians founded colonies
and cities for their trade in many parts —
in Gades, Greece and Thrace; in Italy;
at Cittium, Thera, Argos, Thebes and Tarsus;
in the Balearic Islands and at Malta,
Sardinia, Sicily and Corsica;
at Ardrimentum, Utica and Leptis.

100

Phoenicians sailed the fleets of Solomon
from Red Sea coasts to Ophir and to Tarshish.

Remarkable tales persist about Phoenicians. . . .

sailing . . . sailing . . . over the wide Pacific,
reaching America, establishing

110

cultural impress there, and on the Islands . . .

sailing and sailing through the coloured mists
of Time and Speculation. . . .

Mark a story:

Necho, Egyptian Pharaoh, sent Phoenicians
to circumnavigate the land of Libya.

They left the Red Sea, entering Indian Ocean;
they reached the Southern Cape; then, doubling up
along the Atlantic coast, made entry through
the Pillars of Heracles to Mediterranean,
and so returned triumphant to the Nile.

120

This marvellous voyage of Antiquity
was held in disbelief by later ages. . . .

Yet some declare it true, through circumstance
of those bold navigators having known
the Sun upon their right hand as they rounded
the southern baulk of land.

Is this account
myth-transformation from undoubted deeds
of Carthaginian Hanno, who performed,
in those far times, a venturous exploration
along the Libyan coast? Is Hanno's glory
eclipsed but by a fable of itself?

130

Hanno returned the very way he went.

Today we wonder and wonder. . . . Long ago,
was there yet bolder conception, yet a braver,
more patient, well-thought execution? — seamen
disembarking on the land in autumn

to sow transported corn in Libya,
awaiting harvest, then continuing
upon a three-year voyage which, in daring,
equals all later ventures of renown?

140

Despite all doubt, amid the coloured mists
of Ancient Time is vivid evidence
of enterprise in commerce and in travel.
Oh, far mysterious yesterdays of men! . . .
whence we may trace the patterns of first thought
concerning lands and oceans of the world.

[*Okeanos*]

Okeanos, from philosophic minds
in Civilization's far Chaldean dawn,
rolled out to gird those regions of the World —
Europa, Asia, Libya — mortal men
might dare to bring to knowledge. Circumfluent,
this Antic Sea rimmed all that might be known
immediately by men. Beyond its stream,
wherein dwelt Ea, the Exalted Fish,
Protector of the Earth, was Ge, the Pit
of the Infernal Powers; and, far above
the convex world, spread Ana, Highest Heaven,
the realm of Zi, the Master Spirit, greater
than all those Seven Resplendent Animals,
the kindly Planets, and all those evil demons,
the Seven Fiery Phantoms — which opposing
factions of good and evil, under Zi,
contended in Lower Heaven.

140

150

Mermer, the Wind,
blew clouds about the World, and filled the sails

of Ea's magnificent ship on Okeanos.

There are no relics left in cuneiform,
memorials from old Chaldean cities,
to tell of dissolution in the Heavens,
the fall of proud omnipotent Zi-Ana
and all the lesser Spirits, or explain
the vanishing of Ea and his ship.

160

These passed from power; these all had dissolution;
and Zeus and Jove, and other Gods of Greece
and Rome, departed. Mermer, the Wind, remained —
for Man cannot gainsay the weathers — shown
on Mediaeval globes and charts in forms
conventional of creatures blowing horns,
whence came the gales and winds. . . .

And still there rolled
Okeanos, earth-clinging, man-imagined
from rude salt-water and all Mystery,
earth-clinging Okeanos, all undeterred;
disposed as Man proposed — first, by Chaldeans,
fixed in the Northern Polar Region (then
not thought of capped with ice, but mouth of Ge),
and later, by the Greeks, conceived to be
much nearer the Equator. . . .

170

Okeanos
was destined, zone-expanding thus, to cramp
three continents within a quarter-world,
and leave three others out of globes and charts,
except in fantasy, but one of these —
the latest surely known but oldest dreamt,
and variously conjectured in the works
of early writers as the Antichthon,
Great Southern Land to balance Northern Lands,

180

or by mysterious name of Synti Bygd
(meaning of which is lost with centuries),
or Southern Desert, or Fourth Part of the World.

[Ancient Traditions of the South Land]

Traditions of this Land of huge extent
derive from writings of Antiquity,
and from the un-lettered age before, the vast
primaeval time's bequest of primal knowledge
in vague and doubtful rumour for the future.

190

The mighty epic poet of Greece, who wrote
before recorded history of Hellas,
before the Dorian conquest, and who knew
of Dorians only in the Isle of Crete:
Homer declared that there were two Black Races,
one West, in Africa, of which men knew,
the other East, concerning which report
was flimsy, built on hearsay, yet might seem
to modern minds to indicate Australians,
bringing the Great South Land into an ethnic
continuum of the Dravidians
in India, and others further East.
This Hecataeus, Herodotus and Strabo,
following Homer, later would confirm.

200

Theopompos of Chios, who had studied
under Isocrates and who espoused
the Lacedaemonian cause and fled to Egypt
and unknown fate, his erudite orations
and histories being lost, yet left account,
preserved by Aelian, of how Silenus,
discoursing with Midas, King of Phrygia,
told of an Infinite Island, set beyond

210

the confines of the circumfluent sea;
and Grecian scholars, Eratosthenes
and sage Hipparchus, placed the Antichthon
not as a planet separate from the World,
but, fitted in the Zones of Aristotle,
as Antipodean land-mass, where men's feet
stood opposite those at Alexandria;
and Roman Cicero essayed a hazard,
which, later, facts endorsed, at the position
of the Southern Continent, and Crato even
deduced the racial type of the Australians.

220

Manilius, bard of Rome about the time
Augustus or Tiberius was Caesar,
writing his *Astronomica*, asserted,
in words austere yet blazing vision
that there were habitable Antipodes.

230

[*Alexander*]

Great Alexander, student of old Homer,
founder of many cities, King of Greece,
and ruler over Persia, met the tides
of Indian Ocean, sailing out upon them,
sending his admiral, Nearchus, westward
across the water to the Persian Gulf,
where he arrived with pale and sleepless crew.

What conquests and discoveries by sea
remained to Alexander, had he lived,
lover of exploration, seeker of knowledge,
practical dreamer, dreaming man-of-action!
He died, and geographic authority
was left to theorists. . . .

240

Okeanos,
constraining river of the mind, roll on!

[*The Cramping of Geography*]

Megasthenes might visit Chandragupta,
Pomponius Mela write of Golden Chryse,
Pliny might tell of the south-west monsoon,
Marinus record his simple sailor's story
of voyage to Malay Peninsular;
and Ptolemy might base upon the tales
of travellers and study of tradition
his *Geographia* or *Almagest*;
but, in the lack of such immediate knowledge
as might have been discovered and recorded
by some great Alexander of the sea
pushing beyond the trade routes, even those
known to the merchants of old India,
Geography was cramped in study walls.

250

Pomponius Mela spread upon the map
a burning tropic Ocean, bar to men,
beyond which lay the Southern Continent,
wherein the Nile had origin and source;
and Ptolemy enclosed the Indian Ocean,
making it land-locked sea, with shores that swung
to join the Southern Land with Africa.

260

Then Christian Dogma, climbing into power
upon the minds of men, arranged the World
in symmetry about the Holy Land,
placing huge obstacles of bigotry
athwart the path and prospect of true Science;
and clinging, paradoxical occasions,
to heathen arguments that cramped the mind. . . .

270

[*The Harbours of the Sun*]

*Rumour strides rampant, gloriously robed,
amid the mists of theory and of Time.*

*. . . Resplendent and seductively appealing
now dream and glow the Harbours of the Sun. . . .
Oh, wonderful havens of an ancient time,
replete with rich romance to fire the mind
with certainty — until cold reasons spurt
hard brilliant hail of queries to dispel
all certainty and leave thought unresolved. . . .
And still they glow, the Harbours of the Sun,
upon the coasts of Carpentaria
and trending all the way south-west to Broome,
pearl-misted, lovely Harbours of the Sun. . . .
Are they mirages in the mists of Time?*

280

[*The Great South Land Aloof*]

*Long after the Chaldean mud-brick temples
had crumbled from glory, and Homer, Theopompos,
Manilius, Strabo, Ptolemy were dust . . .
Okeanos constrained both map and mind,
while, by whatever names hypothesised,
imagined, sought or charted, stood, throughout
Ancient and Mediaeval centuries,
aloof within the South, the Great South Land.*

290

*Aloof within the South, the Great South Land
stood, wrapped in solitudes of sun and star
and ever-moving ocean. . . .*

The southern skies were brilliant with the birds

*that flew each dawn from the very dawn of the world 300
to scribble exhilarating hieroglyphs
of beautiful colour and wild, sweet, piercing peace
against the clouds, tree-branches, shining scarps
of rock that glowed and burned. . . .*

*The southern dawns and sunsets fumed and flashed
across the timeless bushland, tides of light
washing about the ranges and the plains,
streaming on river-sands and river-waters,
flooding the gibbers and the dunes, and making
surf in mesembryanthemum and spear-grass, 320
surf on the piled-up banks of sea-weed, meeting
the white and sun-shot surf of the tireless ocean
upon the sombre and the radiant coasts.*

*The Great South Land stood, through the days and nights
of changeful yet unchanging beauty, bearing
the seals of the striding Sun on its soaring peaks,
the light of stars upon its billabongs,
knowing the glory of Alcheringa,
brooding upon the rich and gentle lives
of sleek, soft-footed beast and lithe, alert 330
dream-haunted hunters. . . .*

*Far from the North of massing battle-hordes,
the North of lust and of no mortal rest,
the North where genius of enterprise
was covetous and cankered to the roots,
South was the beauty of the Southland flowers,
South was the stern allegiance to the Sun,
South was the starlight clear in human hearts.*

Aloof within the South was the Great South Land.

BOOK FOUR

Kaleidoscope

[Inter-relation of All Human Affairs]

All History has waited on migrations,
movements of races from the earliest times,
instinct with destinies, disasters, joys,
with mortal strifes and kindly harmonies,
fore-written for the Future. . . .

All the lands
and all the oceans of the reeling World
have been, from Time Primaeval, grave attendants
upon the fortunes of Humanity —
divided, multiple, related fortunes,
assembling, through immediate events
that seemed to occupy but limited
particular horizons, far prescriptions,
certain and inescapable for all
the ways of Man upon the land and sea.

10

Fateful events beside the Caspian,
impelling mortal conduct in the crude
remote Stone Ages; slow, deliberate,
and sudden, thoughtless, all irrevocable,
decisions, deeds and preparations made,
among the raw communities of people
in distant time, upon the steppes of Russia;
in caves of France and Spain; in Hittite camps;
in Asia Minor's Fertile Crescent; where
the Swiss pile-villages stood out of water;
In India of Tu-te-gangi-marama . . .
such long-lost, buried, irrecoverable
occurrences have under-written all

20

the racial-geographic characters
observed today or destined for Tomorrow.

There is no self-contained or isolated
corner of human or of global History;
but everywhere, in everything, abides
an intricate, gigantic Circumstance,
in webbed reticulation and adjustment
of dominant Destiny for all Mankind.

30

Regard the salient facts of History,
outstanding happenings, conditions, trends,
significant, epochal. . . . Mind perceives
their gradual creation through the ages.
Such facts are fateful weavings, wrought from threads 40
of various and scattered origin,
brought into bold and subtle combination,
producing ultimate momentous themes.

Kaleidoscopic to the scrutiny
of keen enquiry start the elements
of our Australian story, brought together
by Time and Destiny for Mind to grasp
from Palaeolithic and Primordial Ages,
from racial movements, conflicts and migrations,
from geographic dispositions, all 50
one variegated covenant of Fate.

[Beginnings of English Sea-power]

While brown Dravidian people made their camps
in legend-hallowed ranges of Australia,
or on the plains or by the coastal surges,
the Saxon race, from Northern Germany

and Cimbrian Chersonesus, took possession
of sea-coasts stretching from the Rhine to Jutland,
and thence infested with their piracies
the east and south of Britain and North Gaul.
On dissolution of the Roman power,
Hengist and Horsa, fierce and avid warriors, 60
conquered the Isle of Thanet, next advanced
to help the Britons crush the Picts and Scots,
and then, with ruthless strength, subdued the Britons.
Thereafter, Alfred, who opposed the Danes,
built British ships and laid a sure foundation
for England's ocean power; and Englishmen
competed more and more in Europe's trade,
were more intrepid than Italian sailors,,
who, till the use of the magnetic compass, 70
were loth to leave the Mediterranean Sea.

Before the Fourteenth Century, the English
were sailing north and south in white-capped waters,
their own rough seas, and in the Mediteranean.

Here was beginning of a sea tradition
in which would blaze a galaxy of names
for all the world to marvel at, the names
of Hawke and Drake and Cavendish and Cook,
of Nelson, Frobisher and Dampier,
of Matthew Flinders and so many more. 80

The generations of the English seamen
first plied their vigorous calling doggedly
with venturous zeal, yet with no loud assertion
of their pre-eminent, grand rendezvous
with Destiny, whose favour was to raise
them high to mastery of all the oceans
and lead them to the Southern Continent.

The Hanseatic League and merchant powers
of Spain and France and Italy secured
much Oriental produce for despatch
to every part of Europe.

90

O the East,
the fabulous, remote, mysterious East,
offered the richest, rarest fruits of trade.
Amalfi, Venice, Genoa and Pisa
were favourites of that trade; and Venice formed
commercial treaties with the Saracens,
maintaining, by Mohammedan indulgence,
dealings with Egypt and with Syria.

The Baghdad Caliphs, with the fall of Rome,
became supreme within the Eastern World.

100

Arabian merchants steadily pursued
the tracks well-beaten from Antiquity:
their ships, which sailed away from India,
called at Ceylon and at the Nicobars,
then touched the north-east corner of Sumatra. . . .
Sometimes they voyaged onward to Malaya,
the Isle of Bantan, the Natuna Group,
Siam, Cambodia and Southern China.

. . . And Venice blossomed like a flower to West.

110

Prosperity and grace were hers. She stood
chief factor for Europe with Orient. . . .

Venice, the Queen of Adriatic waters;
the City on the Sea, which proudly boasted
perpetual freedom from barbarian yoke;
stately upon the bosom of the waves,
from which her palaces emerged in light. . . .

Successive tides of tyranny might sweep
the mainland with the rise and fall of Empires,
the changes of dynasties, yet Venice paid
no tribute to a conqueror, despatched
no levies to do service in the wars —
in trade her source and scope of empery,
wherein her Arts and gentle Culture throve.

120

[*Marco Polo*]

Out of the lustrous, glittering halls of Venice
went Marco Polo, ardent after knowledge
and smiling signs of trade, to distant China
and Court of Kublai Khan; came bearing back
rare store of information into Europe.

In sojourn on the Cochin-China Coast,
and warm Malacca Straits, he gathered much
about the islands to the South, and gave
account of many — in particular
of Java Minor and of Java Major;
described his Java Major as the largest
island in all the World, from which description
and its attendant features we suppose
he had intelligence of Northern Coasts
of our Australian Continent, assuming
them part and parcel of the Javan land. . . .

130

They gleam and glow, the Harbours of the Sun. . . .

140

Confusion crowded geographic salons,
from Nicoli di Conti's subsequent
mistaking of Sumatra for Great Java,
and other uncertain knowledge of the time.

Cartographers — extravagant in errors
of longitude and latitude — construed
false dispositions for islands to the east
of India, reports of which were brought
to Europe by successive travellers —
some, missionaries, intent to found the Church
in heathen India and heathen China;
and others, merchants, lustful after trade,
who eagerly recounted tales of spice
of every kind and gorgeous tapestries,
and turned attention of the Western Nations
to India, Cathay and the Moluccas.

150

The European mind was now conceiving
its greedy, stern intent to be possessed
of treasure-houses of the Orient . . .
and Time would bring successors to the brave
Phoenician navigators to the South
of Africa — from opposite direction,
and far more covetous in shrewd design . . .
while other keels would cut into the vast
Pacific Ocean from America,
ship's canvas bellying to winds that blew,
till then, no navigators on their way
but dusky Stone Age people of those seas.

160

[*The Polynesians*]

Drive back in mind to a time when hollow
and crest on the seas of the South bore only
the venturing proas of Polynesians
with maps of reeds and the stars to follow —
their minds not vast with the logic of Grecians,
but vaster than theirs with the dreams of the lonely.

170

Easter Island hieroglyphs
may not be read;
and could they be, would they say more
than the seas have said?

*The hot days on the ocean
in the island-built boat
and the roller's strong motion. . . .*

180

The Polynesians wrote
no record on papyrus
or tablet of clay,
but the water holds their voices,
ululoa night and day. . . .

*The hurricane would drive us,
the calm delay. . . .*

The Polynesian peoples knew a rude
yet glorious golden age in their Pacific:
they wrought their song and dance and decoration
against the background of the sunset colours
upon fantastic jagged peaks that pierced
the burning clouds and flashed with fires of snow
and fumed with smoke of mist; they lived their lives
in sound of surf upon the reef, the breeze
in palm-tree fronds, the whistling of bright birds;
and all such things made music in their soul,
brought songs upon their lips. Their hearts were filled
with sunlight dazzling on the still lagoon,
with beauty of the waterfalls that waved
fierce lovely tresses to the sea-horizons.
They built their houses in the shadowy groves
of cocoanut beneath the tropic jungle,
wherein they watched the long-tailed cuckoo flying,

190

200

great grey wood pigeons and gemmed parakeets,
wild duck, blue heron and gay crimson doves,
and, over all, the tropic bird that sails,
with snow-white wings outspread, from peaks of snow,
above high places where the *maraes* are, 210
the island temples where the Gods abode.

Was it before the time great Hammurabi
drew up his Code of Babylonian Laws,
while Cnossus yet was in her pride of culture,
that the ancestral Polynesians left
the India of Tu-te-gangi-marama
on early stages of the far migrations
that brought them through the Indonesian Islands
and by the arcs of scattered island groups, 220
in slow succession of the centuries,
into the wide Pacific seas at last?
The claim is most prodigious and appears
improbable of truth, and yet it points
detailed antiquity in memory
of Polynesian peoples and asserts
their Indian origin.

Small doubt there is
that Tangi-ia, last of all the ancients,
in Polynesian story, reached the islands
of Raratonga in days when Marco Polo
moved in the splendour of the Chinese Court . . . 230
and, by that time, the Many Islanders
were traversing the Ocean, group to group,
some centuries established, still exploring.
They knew the vast Pacific at the time
when Anglo-Saxon power arose in England,
long, long before the Norman Conquest, long
before the Moors were set at bay in Spain,

before the dynasty of Tang in China. . . .

Courageous sailors were these strong brown people,
these Polynesians, Many-Islanders, 240
faring upon the spacious world of waters,
discovering island homes, and giving such
the wonderful aura of their sacred legend.

These seamen used the trade-winds and the stars,
and charts of fibre strung on wooden frames,
with shells at intersections, representing
islands and reefs upon the waste of waters.

The charts they orientated to the Sun
and stars, and in the fibres read the signs 250
of winds in season, trends of ocean currents,
and distances between the island landfalls.

In long, sleek, carven craft, they cut the waters;
they took with them sea-anchors, and, in storm,
hove to and waited till the fury passed. . . .

Established in their islands, yet with hearts
adventurous for daring distant waters,
essayng now and then new colonies
in new-discovered islands, did such people
at any time touch on the Great South Land?

There is no record of a Great Canoe, 260
like *Tainui* or *Aotea*, coming
within the Barrier Reef or anywhere
upon the Southland shoreline.

Islanders,
who sailed the wide Pacific, not discover,
at any time, the Southern Continent?
If ever in their wanderings they did,
they left it to the Tribes they could not hope

to dispossess upon their own hard soil,
against their strong endurance, skilful weapons,
superior in Australia to all comers, 270
all weapons and all strategies, except
those of the Western Nations with their iron,
their steel, their guns, their selfish, conquering creeds.

The Polynesians, happier in their islands,
where creepers and tree-ferns filled the gorges under
the waterfalls; where lavish vegetation
was dripping moisture, spray made endless dust,
and cocoanuts were crowding on the beaches
in serried ranks . . . the Polynesians never
could find Australia good; and, if they knew 280
this Land at any time, they turned away
from her hostility to dreams of ease. . . .
They failed to find her bright Alcheringa.

*Let others find her, tongues of rumour tell
about the Land whose soil was Ash, wherefrom
spluttered and flamed the brazen, brilliant sunrise,
and guttered and sped the rampant lights of evening;
let rumour ring with calls of flame-bright birds
which thronged the skies above the Land of Parrots . . .
the Great South Land . . . the Great South Land, aloof 290
within her wash of lonely seas, a-glow
within warm wonder of Alcheringa.*

[One Human Destiny]

Trace now the lineaments of one Destiny
for all Mankind on Earth, drawn composite
in grand reticulation out of Time
and Race and Place, in which the part of this

great moment and of that, this Race and that,
and this and that environmental factor,
condition and shape, in dominant conjunction,
the future of unborn millions of Mankind. 300

Make way for Portuguese and Spanish sailors,
sailors of Holland and slow-stirring England. . . .
Perceive, in their adventures, consummation
of all the grand succession of sea-farers
from days of Troy.

Yet mark the Mystery
that clings forever to the Indian waters . . .
the Bengal Bay eight hundred years a highway,
and not one Indian captain off his course?
and not one junk from China blown astray
upon the coastline of the Great South Land? 310
and never proas from Malay or Java
borne to the shores of Carpentaria?

[*Oriental Tradition*]

The tamarinds upon our Northern Coast,
and Chinese fishing relics on the East,
are merest gestures of the mocking secrets
that ridicule the hide-bound doubting Thomas
whose hands and eyes demand the written log-book.

In Oriental temples and museums
what secret records are preserved to tell
of voyages which ante-dated all 320
the exploits of the European captains
who found the lonely Australasian seas?

Cheng Ho, obedient to the Emperor Yung —
three-quarters of a century before
Vasco da Gama rounded Africa —
left China for Ceylon with sixty-two
great junks in a single fleet.

He reached Sumatra,
and then turned westward, but a storm arose,
with thunder, lightning, and torrential rain
that yet could not allay such furious seas
as reared and curled above the cumbrous craft,
crushing upon them with relentless fists.
Some foundered, painted dragons diving under
the turbulent waters, not to reappear;
some piled in wreckage on adjacent shores;
and others were harried, out of all control,
for league on league to South, before their crews,
wearied and buffeted, could find resource
to measure their dire distress and seek to mend it.

330

The Emperor Ying Tsung, in later years,
regarded a porcelain map, an exquisite thing,
most delicately wrought, and cried: "Cheng Ho,
in spite of the disaster, ought to be
remembered, since survivors of his fleet
marked out a strange barbarian coast. Behold,
it has a longer coast than China's, that
remote and unattractive Southern Land.
Such evidence is curious for scholars."

340

brought forty pirate vessels South, before
the days of Tasman, to Van Dieman's Land.
So says tradition. Prince of ocean robbers,
this Nagamasa knew the Coral Sea
like the back of his own hand; and, it is thought,
he landed on Cape York Peninsula.

350

[*Seiyo and Sei-tso*]

The sacred texts of the Hojiki Temple
tell of Yamada Nagamasa's voyage
to Seiyo . . . Seiyo . . . Southern Continent,
which is identical with Tsuyo, named
in *Liang Shi*, an earlier Chinese record,
the Southern Land . . . the Coral Land to South;
while Sei-tso . . . Sei-tso . . . Southern Land of Pearls —
Australia's Coast from Broome to distant Darwin? —
Sei-tso found record with the Japanese.

360

[*Surmise*]

In all the ports of all the World, all time
since ships were made that could forsake the shallows,
seamen, constrained awhile to stay ashore,
like gulls perched on the sands but ready for flight,
have sat and fidgeted upon stone steps, beside
the water's edge, and looked across the waves
away from land, their eyes akin to ocean,
with passing shadows of clouds, and tumbling flecks
of foam, and airy veils of spray, and hover
and swoop of gull-wings, with gulls' wavering cries . . .
and some of these impatient sailors dreamed,
on sunny or windy days, in temperate

370

or hot or wintry climes, in circumstances
washed over by long centuries, washed over
and drowned with little familiarities,
the unseen time-deep weeds of life once lived . . . 380
dreamed . . . some of these forgotten sailors dreamed
of wonders over-sea, some things they knew
and some imagined. . . .

Old weathered salts
| of ancient Greece would tell of Western Islands,
and surely were believed. . . .

In Portugal
they told of Prester John, and were believed. . . .

In Persia, Tyre, Java and Malaya
were men who had voyaged far and witnessed marvels,
who dreamed in the sun with eyes on glinting waters. . . .

And by the China Sea were slant-eyed salts 390
face-coarsened and hand-hardened, who saw past
the bobbing junks that traded with Cipangu
to scenes the many could not dream of. . . .

One
or two or three, a few, one here, one there,
native to Baghdad, China, Portugal,
born to one generation or another
in span of space and time . . . a few . . . a few
| dreamed of the Land of Parrots. . . . Ah, bright birds,
flame-spears above the bush of Capricorn! . . .
dreamed of the Land of the South, and carried visions 400
of Carpentaria or Barrier sunsets, flaunting
within their minds, while learned scholars merely
conjectured with fabulous charts and supposition,

conjectured with arguments of abstract logic,
yet to be proven, and most to be proven wrong.

Who, after the Negritos or the brown
Dravidians of old migrations, first
discovered the Great South Land? We do not know. . . .

[*Shreds of Rumour*]

That ancient travellers from India,
Malaya, Java, China and Japan
touched on the long, lone shoreline of Australia,
and saw the folk of dim Alcheringa
live their nomadic lives among its hills
and plains, we may believe from evidence
that bears no seal of uncontested dates,
yet stands to mock our questing, as a cloud
of brazen colour which cannot be bound.

410

Australian shores are haunted by the ghosts
of early visitors, which all may see
and follow into mists of speculation,
losing them where the parrot-sunsets burn
on cloud and bush and hill and coastal dune.

420

Hold gently and lightly shreds of rumour, showing
upon this chart, and this. . . . Half-dreaming, murmur
words written long ago. . . .

Ah, fragile shreds
which show that someone knew . . . that someone
knew . . .
the Psittacorum Terra, Land of Parrots. . . .
Someone marked them, someone marked the parrots.

*In the Land of the South are birds, bright birds . . .
such brilliant feathered creatures as astound 430
the eyes and heart of a beholder, standing
lonely, forgetting loneliness, observing
them flying into the sun or out of the sun
above old trees, arching against white clouds
and blue sky. . . . Bright birds, bright birds . . . golden,
green,
scarlet and vivid blue . . . whistling and never still . . .
wild things of unsullied Nature, never silent . . .
spirits of beauty, whose unfettered vigour
startles the wanderer and causes his blood to burn
within him with knowledge of life, to pulse 440
loud in his temples with music of unleashed
longings and ineffable apprehension
of freedom. . . . Oh, bright birds, bright birds, bright
birds
of the virginal Land of the South, flamboyant birds
in skies of morning flame, of evening flame,
of blazing midday blue, of any time
of the long and vigorous, long and dreamy, days,
vibrant with song where life and dream are one,
where strength and beauty join, and truth and legend. . . .
Bright birds of the Land of the South, a-wing today 450
and yesterday, and before that, before, before,
in the dawn of the world . . . bright birds, bright birds,
flying and crying, swift spears of voice and fire,
filling the dawn of the world in the dazzling South
with unquenchable conflagration of feather and
tongue. . . .
Bright birds, possessing the skies of Capricorn. . . .*

BOOK FIVE

The Portuguese

[*Homage to Old-time Ships*]

Do homage now to old-time wooden ships
and men who sailed them out of Europe, seeking,
in hardy faring, new highways round the world. . . .

Old wooden ships that turned away from land
and made into the wilderness of waves,
tossing throughout the solitude of day
and under the solitude of silent stars;
plunging and pitching on uncharted oceans,
in torrid winds and winds of bitter cold;
tumbled along at mercy of the storms,
with lightnings and thunders, frightening companions,
stabbing and rolling at them from murky horizons. . . .

10

Old wooden ships, ill-found, their timbers rotten,
rejects of royal navies, good enough
for perilous ventures into unknown oceans
on extravagant and gambling enterprises,
conducted by visionary, eccentric captains,
manned by desperate and cut-throat crews,
seafaring scum, the dregs of piracy,
impressed from prison and from dockyard inn,
who knew not on what ventures they were going. . . .

20

Old wooden ships, mere cockle-shells to stand
the accumulated rigours of long-sailing,
the storms, the heat, the cold, the winds, the waves,
teredo in the timbers, fevered bilge. . . .

Old wooden ships, without chronometers,
sextants and ocean-almanacks, without
accurate tables, whose captains had reliance
for latitude on sight of astrolabe
or cross-staff or back-staff, guessed longitude
by keeping dead reckoning with log and lead,

30

keeping a keen look-out all day, all night. . . .
 Old wooden vessels, harried and flayed by storms,
 some winning through, some failing, battered, pushed
 and hurled upon their sides and flattened thus,
 mast-tips, canvas, cross-trees on the cold,
 the ravenous, seething waves, which mounted over
 and over and over their helpless hulks, whose rudders
 flapped in the surges, and whose riggings, pennants,
 inverted scuppers and gripless keels gave out 40
 forlornly the whimpers and whispers of wind and water
 whereby the storms, in grand crescendo claiming
 all sea and sky, acknowledged their destruction,
 while frantic cries of drowning seamen sounded
 ghostly in flurry of breaking rollers, like
 the screams of ocean birds, whose faint salutes
 continued when none heard amid storm's triumph. . . .
 Old wooden ships, held in the jaws of reefs,
 with frayed and streaming canvas, tangled rigging,
 loose to the weathers; with broken masts and spars 50
 shedding salt-crust ed splinters to be borne
 whither the blind waves would; till there remained
 only the bleak bare ribs, worn skeletons
 for superstitious wanderers, passing later,
 to take as sign and portent of disaster. . . .
 Old ships that knew the purpose of stern captains,
 and mutiny of superstitious crews
 that forced their captains to put over helm
 to sail for home which they might never reach. . . .
 Old wooden ships, which bore mortality 60
 through terrors of the spirit, frenzied fears
 that clawed continually at quailing hearts
 huddled in timbers' fragile guarantee,
 and filled each mind with supernatural dark
 and lurid fires, visions of basilisks,
 giants, unchained leviathans, and fiends

of Hell that strode immense through nightmare dreams,
or beat, as birds of Death, their monstrous wings,
and piped upon the airs that howled and sighed
enormously through all the solitudes. . . . 70

Old wooden ships that failed . . . and those that conquered,
their captains, officers and crews returning,
haggard and sick, diminished, yet withal
triumphant, from far voyaging, and laden
not only with wealth of merchandise and surety
of prosperous distant treaty, but replete
with Fascination's cargo, riches of mind
and such experience as men who stepped
from them at last could boast of to their fellows
who, stay-at-homes, would look with reverent wonder 80
upon the heroes of remote adventure. . . .

Old wooden ships which, twenty months from home,
hove to in New World ports, in icy inlets
and lustrous palm-girt havens. . . . Wooden ships
of times long-gone, which furled their sails among
native canoes and painted Chinese junks,
the European crews attending, awed,
to exotic song that seemed to speak the soul
of unfamiliar scenes with overpowering
uncanny force, enough to make of sailors 90
changelings, thereafter strangers to their kin. . . .

Old wooden ships, wherein men kept alive
their thoughts of home, their love of wives and children,
sweethearts and friends. . . . Old wooden ships wherein
some nurtured knowledge of fierce and lustful loves
in far green isles and Oriental ports. . . .

Old wooden ships whose captains, day by day,
meticulously entered in their log-books
records of shipboard happenings, sight of weed
or driftwood on the sea, landfall, direction 100
of wind and current, nature of cloud, bird flights,

and calculation of the ship's position
 upon the vast and watery ways of Earth. . . .
 Old wooden ships, whose sailors raised the songs
 that banished loneliness, until it came
 swelling and surging in, the more intense,
 with ocean wash as each strong chorus ended. . . .
 Old wooden ships whereon the deft musicians
 played for lords and captains, cunningly
 filling the swaying cabins with content 110
 and wonderment and marvel of high venture. . . .
 Old wooden ships, throughout whose length and breadth,
 after long months at sea, the scurvy stalked,
 prostrating and killing in wide and landless waters,
 in wind and calm, emaciated men,
 who found poor succour in decaying biscuit,
 mouldy, rat-nibbled, and dregs of foetid water. . . .
 Old wooden ships, long, long at sea, whose captains
 sought frantically for landfall, any landfall,
 where water might be found, where crews might win 120
 asylum for a space, recovery
 from travail terrible beyond report. . . .
 Old wooden ships, grey ghosts upon the water
 of sunken yesterdays, with canvas bellied
 before the steady winds, in worlds of sea,
 beneath cloud-tumbled skies. . . . Old wooden ships,
 under the burning skies of tropic ways
 which they had reached, mirages hovering
 grotesquely on the hot horizons; crews
 observing fantastic vision, praying God. . . . 130
 Old wooden ships which Nature sometimes blessed,
 at dawn or sunset, with holiest recognition,
 although their strained old timbers creaked and groaned
 even upon the regular ocean-heave,
 gear chattered that screeched to the tremendous
 storms. . . .

Old wooden ships . . . aye, even the feeblest of them. . . .
the most teredo-riddled, ugliest
old tub afloat would sometimes be accorded
a benison and blessing, hazing all
its patched-up canvas and its splintered spars, 140
and be transformed into a ship of gold,
its sails of airy gold-dust shimmering
at dusk beneath the wild flamboyant skies,
wallowing into waves of coloured gloom,
fading like visions of faery into darkness,
the fluttering dark of glinting wave and star. . . .
Beauty aglow with grave divinity,
courage ineffable on stupendous quest,
made manifest in glorious solitude.

[*Doria and Vivaldi*]

Envyng Venice, City of the Sea, 150
her close monopoly of Eastern trade,
Iberians and Genoese essayed
a more circuitous way to India.

Honour be done to Doria and Vivaldi.

Honour for all the unrecorded facts
of brave adventuring by heroes, who
began great tasks in knowledge of their fellows
and lost their lives in secret loneliness,
impregnable to subsequent enquiry,
their fortunes clouded, housed in Mystery, 160
abode of Truth beyond Man's comprehension,
Truth that is deathless yet outside the reach
of mortal cognizance, forever covered
by clinging mists of Time that will not lift

except to show old questions ever new. . . .

How perished Doria and Vivaldi, bravely
venturing Genoese, the first to seek
a sea-route from the West to East around
the continent of Africa?

How far
their small ships bore them on the perilous quest, 170
what sights they came upon, what landfalls made,
whether they died at length on sea or land,
what secrets, what discoveries to be
renewed by later voyagers, were theirs,
we cannot know.

Their names must ever glow
amid the aura of a lost romance,
emblazoned on the scroll of History
with names of better-chronicled successors,
with annals of attested fact, with rumour. . . .

[*The Eastern Trade*]

Ah! fabricated tales of Mandeville 100
of wonders far away, and lavish legends
of Prester John, the priest and king, reputed
to hold dominion in East Africa
and over part of Asia. . . .

Western minds
found avid interest in the fabled East. . . .

The Turkish conquest of Byzantium —
halting the trade of Venice with the Arabs

for nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon and cloves,
for Chinese silks and Indian tapestries —
gave edge and point to intimate enquiry,
exciting geographical discussion. . . .

190

“The point at issue is the Eastern trade. . . .”

Men, seeking out a way by sea from Europe,
cautious in face of old tradition, filled
Atlantic with sunken continents, mysterious
floating islands.

It was asserted that,
beyond Cape Badajos in Africa,
men would turn black and die in torrid weathers . . .
and early navigators, sailing south
by Western Africa, recoiled aghast
before a great cloud clinging to the sea,
till Joao Goncalves Zaco pressed
intrepidly towards it, plunging through
to find Madiera looming up beyond it.

200

[*Prince Henry*]

Daring conception, based on keen enquiry,
together with tireless zeal and stolid purpose,
reduces obstacles to human progress,
can make a serious man originator,
father of strong historic forces, maker
of movement and migrations, instigator
of an epoch in the story of Mankind.
Rarest Originality, derived
from brilliance in perception, and desiring
creation of new circumstance, attains

210

the van of History, and demonstrates,
for comprehension of Mankind at large,
the surprising possibilities of Life.

Prince Henry the Navigator. . . . Think, this man
of royal blood; this humble student of maps;
this gatherer of travellers' tales; examiner
of captains and officers and crews of ships;
deviser of three-masted caravels;
the re-discoverer, through his hardy captains,
of coasts of North-west Africa, Madiera,
Canaries and Azores and Cape Verde;
intent upon scraps of knowledge and clues to knowledge
concerning a route to the Orient; despatcher,
each year for many years, of chosen captains,
with ships equipped, on voyages exploring
a way to south of Portugal to lead
around the African shore to Indian seas
and waters of Cathay. . . . Think, this man
assumed his greatness, wore it without pride,
believing that discoverable Truth
must show at last to honest investigation.

Pursuit of Truth, diligent prosecution
of his idea, in sturdy faith, was what
Prince Henry gave to Life. To Portugal
was the immediate fruit of his endeavour,
to all Mankind at length his high example.

Dom Pedro, brother of Prince Henry, brought
to Portugal, on his return from Venice,
a manuscript of Marco Polo's travels,
together with a map; and Henry's nephew,
King Joao, infected and imbued
with Henry's enthusiasm, and realistic

for Portugal's advance in trade, commissioned
Fra Mauro's Mappamundi, which, completed
a year before Prince Henry died, and borne
to Portugal from Venice by the noble,
Stefano Trevigiano, clearly showed
Cave di Diab, tip of Africa.

250

[*Cape Lopo Goncalves*]

With their three-masted vessels, and the compass,
newly applied from China, Portuguese
sailed from home-ports to chart the western coast
of Africa in gradual progression.
The equatorial line was crossed, the Cape
Lopo Goncalves named, upsetting theories
of inaccessibility of regions
about the Equator or beyond the great
and Circumfluent Ocean.

260

Now the Ocean
lay open to men's minds, and to their ships.

[*Cam and Behaim*]

Diogo Cam, with Martin Behaim, sage
geographer aboard his vessel, sailed
as far as the River Zaire, and there set up
a Padrao, stone pillar with a cross —
the royal arms in sculpture on the front,
King's and discoverer's names upon the sides,
and date in Latin and in Portuguese.
Such Padraos, in place of wooden crosses,
which quickly rotted in the African weathers,

270

were set up in Joao's reign wherever
the Portuguese made new significant landfall.

After Diogo Cam's discovery,
his sovereign took the title, "Lord of Guinea",
as well as that of "King of Portugal,
and of the Algarves on this side the sea,
and out beyond the sea in Africa".

[*De Covilha*]

The sovereign desired to gain alliance
and help of Prester John, and so he sent
Pedro de Covilha into the East
by land to seek the potentate and make
a Christian treaty with him.

280

De Covilha
embarked at Aden on a Moorish ship
for Cananor on the coast of Malabar,
and, sailing out again from there, arrived
at Calicut and Goa, being first
of all his countrymen to make a voyage
upon the Indian Ocean. Next he passed
to Sofala, lying on the Eastern shore
of Africa, examining its mines
of gold, and garnering intelligence
of Al Qamar, the Island of the Moon.
De Covilha heard of cloves and cinnamon,
saw pepper and ginger; and he sent advice
to Portugal that merchant ships might sail
south by the coast of Guinea, and, persisting,
come to the termination of the land
and thus to Eastern seas. "There make enquiry
for Sofala and the Island of the Moon."

290

300

[*Dias*]

Bartholomeu Dias sailed from Portugal
and reached and named Cabo Tormentoso —
soon named anew Buena Esperanza.

[*The Iberian Age*]

By ship, by ship, to India! . . . Cathay! . . .
To India, Cathay, by ocean routes
till now all unexploited by the West.

The quest for old lands waking ghosts of new. . . .

Western Renaissance creeping with the winds
and currents of the World athwart the stark 310
dark places of no-knowledge on the charts. . . .

Pursuit of riches and the Church's glory. . . .

Merchants of Portugal who bear the Cross
before them to the ends of voyaging;
conquistadores of Spain. . . .

Iberian Age,
when Faith was fire; the holy Name of Christ
a blaze-bright stream on the sword-blade, flame
at the smoky maws of arquebus and cannon. . . .

Age of Adventure, ruthless rivalry;
Age of barbaric daring, grotesque slaughter; 320
grim, merciless, fantastic, fervent Age,
with the death-rate high on lusty, greedy ventures,

on desperate, dangerous business, in New Worlds
 and Orient lands far older than the West. . . .
 Age of quick fortune, long endurance, death
 protracted or sudden on the wastes of sea
 spread East to Africa and the Moluccas,
 and West to Terra Firma in the wake
 of Christopher Columbus and among
 the frozen Straits of Ferdinand Magellan. . . .

330

[*The Lonely Pathways*]

It is written in the waters that some swam
 for hours before they drowned, strove manfully,
 in spite of niggard hope, to draw out life
 to miraculous escape on cask or spar,
 and mercifully sank under at the last,
 benumbed to inanition, wearied to lack
 of knowledge of the seas that stifled breath;
 while others screamed most piteously to God
 in terror that brought no answer but worse terror,
 fear-shrill, wave-snuffed screeches of madness, flung 340
 to gulping topple of wave-crest, while hands clawed
 in blank salt-water or touched on wavering weed
 that slipped the grasp like Hope, or lied like Hope,
 and sank like Hope, going with madmen down
 to be inconsequent shreds in the guts of sharks,
 where bloody juices acidulated bone
 and won dead flesh anew to living cells. . . .

It is written in the log-books that men lingered
 in misery with stench of running sores.

So . . . so are triumphs won, and riches won,
 the dreams of beauty followed to fulfilment,

350

ideals retained and vindicated, through
the most disastrous fortunes of Mankind.

The lonely pathways of the ships of princes
and merchants bide less plainly on the ocean
than in the brains of captains, therein wrought
of fitful quiver of compasses in binnacles,
ink-marks on parchment, serviceable positions
of stars, direction of the winds. Thus only
are followed the hair-fine, feature-few itineraries 360
across Earth's weltering wilderness of waves.

[*Vasco da Gama*]

Vasco da Gama . . . name with which to conjure . . .
attacking Islam in the name of Christ;
wrester from the brown Mohammedan hands
of coveted Oriental treasuries;
a rag-tag Alexander of the East,
cock of the dawn of Trade Monopoly;
pious barbarian, who took first spoils
in realization of Renaissance dreams
of dominating heathen wealth and pomp. . . . 370

Vasco da Gama and his successors brought
a new commercial concept to the East —
at variance with immemorial
tradition in those seas, and even strange
to European practice. . . .

Portugal
now claimed exclusive right to Indian trade,
and organized her might to prove her claim.

The King of Portugal accrued the titles,
“Lord of the Conquest, Navigation, Trade
of Ethiopia, Persia, India”.

380

[*Albuquerque*]

Alfonso Albuquerque, by conquering
Socotra, Ormuz and Malacca, based
new territorial power in the East,
establishing that strong supremacy
his royal master claimed as rising from
the Bull of Pope Calixtus.

Moghul glory
grew pale upon the sea; and Akbar suffered
humiliation — saw his Empire trade
arrested and the flow of pilgrim traffic
to Mecca harried, by the Portuguese. . . . 390
the Portuguese, who swarmed through Asian regions,
adventurers, fortune-seekers, filibusters,
zealous for profits under the Cross of Christ,
unblushing brigands, perpetrating deeds
of blood whose evil memory stays to stain,
with bitterness and dark suspicion, dealings
in modern times between brown race and white.

[*Portuguese Ruthlessness*]

In settling India and Lower Burma,
and islands of those coasts, the white men set
the Native States against each other, levied
extensive blackmail, sold to slavery
peoples of States who dared oppose their power.

400

The East beheld the rabble-rout of trade
establish hated despotism where
the strong monsoons brought curious craft to harbour —
sampan and prahu, and huge glittering junks
with huge eyes painted on them, staring down
in fixed vacuity at rattan cables,
under the gloom of coastal forests, dripping
their dew both day and night upon the beaches, 410
and vibrant, shrill, with noise of birds and insects.

Mammon's domain spread where the Indian seas
laughed with the sunrise and revealed at evening
a million rippling smiles, while distant islands
floated on clouds of purple, clouds of gold,
the night mists rising from the quiet wave
to swathe the bases of the soaring peaks. . . .

What case, amid the realism of war,
had Hindu and Mohammedan? . . . what use
their guile and tempered steel against the force 420
of Christian enemies, whose ruthless hearts
and minds were consecrated to the service
of Fiery Cross and Golden Calf of Mammon,
backed up by battle fleets and pounding ordnance?

What knew the dark Malays, extempore singers
of love songs in the moonlight, men who skylarked
like children when their day of work was done,
who sought wild honey in the sombre wood,
fresh turtle eggs upon the beach, observed 430
their heathen mummary and incantation —
what knew they of the ruthless ways of Mammon?
What use, the hands and creese of the Malay,
against the powder-and-ball of European,
which seared with lightning death through bright sarong

and yellow girdle, spattering all with blood?

The waters of the Indian Seas ran blood
as never before in all their history,
received into their depths the slaughtered bodies
of whole ships' companies of native folk,
while over them wreathed European gun-smoke. . . . 440

The waters of the Indian Seas could tell
no tale like this in all their restless wash
of Time eventful from Antiquity. . . .

[Free Trade Traditions]

*Waves whispered of a million voyages,
when trade was free and brotherly, except
for pirate plunderers no State endorsed,
who sped to strike and scurried back to hiding,
leaving the waves dyed seldom, desperate rogues
whose trade was hard and bitter, of small worth,
with all men's hands against them and prepared. . . . 450
Waves murmured of swaying prows and gliding keels,
of rapid prahus and old lumbering junks,
plying the trade routes, signalling each other
with friendly human voices day and night;
vessels of Hindu, Chinese, Arab traders,
making their various ways through mellowing Time,
laden with riches and auras of tradition,
backwards and forwards between such Eastern places
as Suez and Massowar, Kararan, Aden;
as Diu and Chaul, Goacandi, Calicut,
Tricomalee, Malacca . . . setting out
from Chinese ports to sail away as far
as Quilon, Cochin, Cranganor and back;*

460

*from Muscat and Socotra and Malindi
to far Mombasa, Kilwa, Alqamar. . .*

Throughout the Sixteenth Century, the ships
of Portugal sailed back and forth from Lisbon
to Indian seas, securing wealth of spice
and precious stones, all sorts of merchandise
of rare, rich quality — the lust for gold
causing much over-lading. . . .

470

Many a time
was shipwreck, with the loss of crew and cargo.
Sometimes a ship would vanish without trace,
blown off its course and never heard of after . . .

and crews were cast upon the fevered coast
of Africa. A few escaped to tell. . . .

And some, perhaps, although no record lives,
were cast to die upon the Great South Land.

[Questions]

What knew the Portuguese of this great Country?
Something for sure, which, in their rivalry
with Spain, they kept a secret. Old-time charts
bespeak some knowledge . . . and early rumour spoke
of the Land of Parrots, Psittacorum Terra,
Loac Provincia. . . .

480

More questions burn. . . .

What Catholics or Protestants from Europe,
bent on illegal ventures, disregarding

Papal and royal edicts and fixed charters,
discovering Magellan's icy Straits,
perhaps before Magellan, or, sneaking around
South Africa, thence carefully evading
official routes, made landfalls on the coast
the long, lone coast to north, south, east or west?

490

BOOK SIX

The Spaniards

[*Columbus and Balboa*]

The Genoese, Columbus, taking service
with Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain,
found in the waters of America
illusion of the waters of Cathay.

The knights of Spain found otherwise, observed
huge Terra Firma, barrier athwart
their sea-route to the marvellous Moluccas.

Exploiting this New World, they yet sought passage,
through or around it, fit for galleons.

And Vasco Nunez de Balboa heard,
while weighing Indian gold at Panama,
rumours of lands to West where gold was thick,
so thick his scales would be ridiculous
for computation of it.

10

So Balboa
ventured in exploration, and beheld
the sparkling Southern Sea, and, reaching this,
rushed in it, fully clothed, in ecstasy
of patriotic and religious fervour.
Shouting, and brandishing his sword, he claimed
for God and the Castilian King, that Sea
with all of Kingdom and Glory that might be in it.

20

So Spain looked out upon the Southern Sea,
and Alonso Martin launched a frail canoe,
first European navigating waters
where later fair and tired Armadas rode.

The Spaniards, clad in mail, with pennants flying,
with sword and cannon, oaths and pious words,
bestrode the New World and subdued its Kings.

[Cortez]

Cortez, great leader, by the power of God,
and powder and ball, and steaming-blooded steel, 30
and disaffections, conquered Mexico
to be the King's dominion of New Spain,
with Montezuma as a royal vassal,
and vast amphibious Tenoxtica
become a Spanish reservoir of riches —
Tenoxtica, with market twice as large
as Salamanca's, where thousands bought and sold
produce of every kind, too much to reckon,
with cherries and plums, and silks of various colours, 40
that might be from the marts of Granada;
Tenoxtica, where porters thronged with burdens
like porters of Castille; Tenoxtica,
with its great temple, which in beauty beggared
the human tongue of suitable description;
Tenoxtica, of Aztec pagan power,
subjected now, reduced, disgorging wealth.

[Pizarro]

Pizarro, great leader, by the power of God,
and powder and ball, and steaming-blooded steel,
and broken truce, extended next for Spain 50
the ruthless cruelty of occupation.

Landing at lonely places on the coast

of fabulous Peru, enduring fever,
forcing his way through forests which exhaled
foetid dank vapours of disease. . . .

Behold
the soaring Andes!

Up those mighty mountains
at last Pizarro marched, and over them,
coming to Caxamalca with his soldiers,
bearing the flag of Spain, with guns and swords
to prove its power good.

At Caxamalca,
which sparkled like a gem upon the skirts
of the sierra, its houses glittering white
beneath the sun, beautiful in a landscape
chequered with patches of various cultivation
and crossed with verdant hedgerows. . . .

60

Here the Inca
was caught by trickery, under sign of truce,
and held for extortionate ransom, which, though paid,
served not to save the royal Peruvian neck
from strangulation, on a trumped-up charge,
in the plaza, with applause of Spanish soldiers
and consent of Father Vicente de Valverde.

70

The conquerors gloated with their greedy eyes
on shining heaps of treasure, which were brought
to them by Indian porters at Caxamalca;
at Pachacamac, they burst with sacrilege,
through portals decked with ornaments of crystal
and turquoises and coral, into the temple
of the tutelar Deity; they marched to Xauxo

on horses shod with silver in lieu of iron;
and, coming to Cuzco, had the natives tear
from the Temple of the Sun seven hundred plates 80
of beaten gold, each one a work of art,
and these with other ornaments were melted
to golden ingots for despatch to Spain.

Thus Christian Knights established firm dominion
within the New World of America,
subduing Aztec, Inca, Maya peoples,
whose heathen wealth invited swift subjection,
making conversion of them much desired . . .

and knights of Spain, stern conquerors upon
a new-found continent, rapacious-hearted, 90
gazed to West across the Southern Sea,
covetous of the treasures of Spice.

Exploiting Terra Firma, yet they sought
a way beyond it fit for galleons.

[*Magellan*]

Magellan, accosting pilots in harbour inns;
Magellan, the limping voyager, the scholar;
Magellan, brooding, like the Navigator,
upon sea-charts and problems of longitude;
acquiring all sea-knowledge of his time;
receiving from, and sending to, Serrano 100
letters concerning ways to reach the East;
forsaking Portugal for Spain, to follow
his burning purpose; considering, conferring
with Diogo Barbosa and Ruy Faliero
concerning a Western route to India;

winning the ear of influence to attention,
and confidence of Charles, the Emperor;
securing vessels riddled with decay. . . .

Magellan, so men said, was lunatic. . . .

Yet he inspired great confidence, this man
who gathered his mixed and cosmopolitan crew
from Europe, Africa and the Moluccas.

110

In the Church of Santa Maria at Seville,
solemn service was held to speed the ships;
but envy sought to prejudice the venture,
and schemers of Portugal, proposing plans,
caused riot on the *Trinidad* before
the sailing; posted vessels to attack
the expedition at the River Plate.

Magellan darted like a bird away
keen Pigafetta of Vicenza keeping
careful account of all that wonderful voyage
across the Equator; the stay at Teneriffe;
the war with baffling winds that stormed the ships
and dipped the yard-arms in the angry sea,
St. Elmo's fires alight upon the mast-tips;
the trouble with Juan de Cartagena; the trouble,
dire promise of triumphant mutiny,
with Luis de Mendoza, he who paid
quickly, a knife in his throat, fallen to deck.

120

130

Confronting dangers and some disaffection,
with superstitious crews who wished retreat,
Magellan swore, "By God, we'll eat the leather
off the ships' yards before we fail the quest."

The *Santiago* wrecked on reconaissance,
her famished crew brought to St. Julian,
through great privation, over snow and ice. . . .

[*Todos los Santos*]

The *San Antonio* deserting in
Todos los Santos, where, beheld to North,
the great snow-burdened mountains grimly frowned 140
upon the ships, while, to the South, the fires
of Tierra del Fuego leapt in smoke. . . .

First European in those icy Straits,
first-comer there with canvas-spreading ships,
Magellan, sighting Cabo Deseado,
the Cape of his Desire, aware of perils
survived and threatening for the future, yet
gushed grateful tears to Heaven for proof of faith. . . .

[*The Pacific*]

The ships plunged through a sea so great the mind
could scarcely grasp it, passed a thousand islands 150
eluding sight beyond the sea-horizons.

North-west, north-west, across an Unknown Ocean,
larger than all Earth's dry lands put together;
girt round with arcs of fierce volcanic peaks
and deeply scoured by submarine ravines;
an Ocean ancient, hoary with its age,
that sacrificed no dignity or strength;
holding, immortal, inexhaustible,
secrets of calm and tempest in its heart,

yet showing now to these Discoverers
such character as won the name Pacific.

160

The ships plunged onward through the grave, green
rollers
that freely roved North, South and East and West
from Behring Straits to bleak Antarctica,
from Mexico for thousands of long leagues
to where the uncharted Barrier Reef stood guard
beside the Great South Land, whose dream-held shores
knew yet no clamour of the Western World.

[*Horrors at Sea*]

Upon a bright and burning sea, three ships
of distant Europe, and Magellan's crews. . . .
For week on week, no tempest harried them,
but horrors worse than tempest hemmed them in,
who saw no habitation but their ships,
who found no island foods, no springs of water.

170

They slaked their thirst with dregs as vile as bilge;
they ripped the hides from off the masts at last,
tough hides which, hardened in the wind and weather,
they dragged for days in ship-wake, broiled and ate.

Men died in misery, with stench of sores,
scorbutic wretchedness that drained and soured
the blood and scoured eruptions through the flesh
and fouled and scarred the skin to rottenness.

180

Strained eyes of sick and dying found at last,
upon the sea's rim, Desadventurados,
islands so named, as Pigafetta tells,

because they mocked at tragic mariners,
as deserts barren of society,
yielding no shred of sustenance or comfort.

The ships passed by. Magellan held a course
just North of South, the Pole Star kept abeam
at night. . . .

190

And so another month wore on,
amid a vast and lonely sea.

Three ships,
ghostly bright in daylight's burning winds,
and ghastly grey beneath indifferent stars. . . .

The canvas hung in tatters from the yards,
and all the crews could do was let them fray.

Could men whose food was leather, flesh of rat,
or last mixed dust of biscuit and rat-droppings,
remember the change of watch? With tortured joints,
gums swollen over teeth, eyes puffed and burning, ²⁰⁰
they moaned upon the decks; and they forgot,
amid the sliding murmur of the sea,
whose watch it was, and why or where they sailed.

[The Isles of the Lateen Sails]

Death reaped a gruesome harvest, would have turned
those ships to aimless, drifting charnel hulks
had not the Lord and His Mother sent good weather,
and occasional gentle rain to combat thirst
until

one dawn on a cobalt-coloured sea

“Vigia . . . vigia . . .”, feeble, incredible cry
from the maintop of the *Trinidad*; and “Vigia . . . 210
vigia . . . vigia . . .”

cries, light feathers of Hope,
wafted from ship to ship of that Armada.

Hearts leapt to a dawn of Isles and Lateen Sails,
and starving men clung, sobbing, to the bulwarks.

Then over the side came pilfering savages.
The sailors, with the strength of desperation,
strove hard to secure the chattels of the decks.

The ship’s boat of the *Trinidad* was whisked,
with flash of island paddles, to the shore.

A sign for war! Cannon and arquebus 220
awoke bird-screeches in the brooding forests;
and forty starving seamen, storming through
abandoned native huts, took loot of fish,
bananas, cocoanuts, figs, sugar-cane,
and sweet spring water, for relief of all.

[*St. Lazarus*]

Magellan next sailed westward, seeking out
new havens of refreshment, and discovered
the island group he named St. Lazarus.

Within this fateful group, his sailors found 230
some comfort of the women; but Magellan

heeded or knew not this, his concentration
all for his mission, deemed as God's and Spain's.

He traded with the Rajah of Sebu
for spice and gold. The Rajah and his people
were then received into the Holy Church
with ceremonial, and such rejoicing
as fired Magellan to extreme of fervour.

He saw himself a soldier of the Cross,
in whom the Causes of the Christ and Spain
were wrought into a shining unity,
divine, ineffable, involving duty
to bring the warlike people of Mactan,
rebels against the Rajah, to submission
and subsequent clear vision of the Lord.

240

*Conceit of self is frailty presuming
to make of insufficiency mirage
of guardian angels, puffing puny self
as something sturdier than Nature framed,
and, by some mystic virtue self-perceived,
uplifted over common dispensation;
and self-conceit is frailty no less
in heroes than in meaner men, may swell
in mighty hearts to mightier proportions,
and issues more deplorable and tragic.*

250

[Disaster at Mactan]

At Mactan followed grim, disastrous battle.
Oh, panic of bow-strings! — Spanish arrows sticking
ridiculously in a horde of shields
advancing like tidal waves on Spanish breast-plates,

out-numbering and almost swamping these
even in urgent flight. . . .

Magellan fallen 260
to earth, and taking in his valiant body
thrust upon thrust of Mactan rebel weapons.

Thus died a hero, whose true character
blazed bright in vision and courage men called mad,
called mad in envy of brave human spirit
that soars despite the human feet of clay.

Without the stern, high-principled Magellan,
survivors of his circumnavigation
traded and looted, giving Eastern Isles
prophetic taste of Western infamy. 270

The *Victoria*, alone of all the fleet,
from three years on the oceans of the World,
bedraggled, leaking, worn with storm and strain,
barnacled thick and riddled with teredo,
commanded by Sebastian del Cano,
brought home her sick survivors into port.

[*Loaysa and del Cano*]

The old dispute about the demarcation
of rights within the Indies stirred anew,
Spain sent another expedition westward,
commanded by Loaysa, with del Cano
as pilot-major . . . 280

but, of seven ships,
one only reached the far Moluccas, bearing

a tale of wretchedness, of storm and wreck,
of death by cold and drowning and disease,
and of del Cano and Loaysa dead.

Out of the horrors of such dreadful ventures,
the real and superstitious miseries
of sea-pent loneliness, emerged a thin
faint beam of light — a slow, uncertain knowledge
that wavered and crept towards the Great South Land. 290

[*Meneses; Saavedra; Grijalva's Crew*]

The coastline of New Guinea, which appeared
in earlier times to sailors from Malay
and India and China, and yet held
impregnable the wild Papuan tribes,
was gestured vaguely to the venturous West
through perilous travel of dangerous-living men —
first, pioneer Meneses; next, Saavedra,
who, sent in vain with succour for Loaysa,
battled against the winds that barred return
to Mexico across the mid-Pacific; 300
then luckless Grijalva's mutinous, murderous crew,
wrecked on a fruitless quest for the Golden Islands.

[*Legaspe; Urdaneta*]

Miguel Lopez de Legaspe crossed the wide
Pacific Ocean to St. Lazarus,
and there established Spain's first colony
in Eastern waters. One of his officers,
monk-seaman Urdaneta, in return
to Mexico, avoided winds and currents

that had obstructed Spain's best navigators,
took a wide sweep to northward till his sails
bellied to strong west winds, like winds that blew
across the North Atlantic. From that time,
Manila Galleons put to sea in June
and sailed to Acapulco, Mexico,
within six months; regularly ships
sailed back and forth across the lonely ocean.

310

A settled highway laid across Pacific!

Though Spaniards knew not what lay either side,
here was a lane for ships.

Beyond, to South,
said Rumour, loomed the Unknown Continent.

320

[*Sarmiento and Mendana*]

Peruvian legend coloured supposition:
the Inca Yupanqui had made a voyage
westward, discovering amazing islands,
rich beyond fancy, and returned with gold. . . .

Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, much
impressed by Inca tradition, held conviction
these storied islands were in truth the outposts
of the Southern Continent, which stretched its bulk
from Tierra del Fuego to Equator.

He voyaged with Alvaro de Mendana,
in two strong ships, to seek the Continent,
pious to win its heathen to the Cross.

330

For almost seven weeks they saw no land,
then, in the grip of currents, just escaped
sharp reefs across their course, and, lashed by cyclone,
borne southward, found an archipelago . . .
under such mountainous land made anchorage,
and by so long a coastline, that Mendana
thought they had found the goal of all their striving.

But Sarmiento, climbing up the ranges,
viewed no vast hinterland with golden temples,
for, stretching from him to its own horizons,
lay Ocean with a scattering of islands.

340

At Santa Ysabel, at Guadalcanal
and at San Cristoval, the Spaniards searched
in vain for gold, their high hopes disappointed;
and, at Malaita, all were much excited
by native clubs with heavy knobs of metal,
gleaming like gold — but glittering pyrites.

Ague and fever stalked upon the ships;
and there was fighting with the Indians,
at whose expense and shortening of rations
the Spaniards exacted food, and whom
they slaughtered and pursued in ruthless rage,
setting their palm-grove villages aflame,
and leaving those isles of their visitation grey
with sifting ashes, and memories of blood.

350

The Spaniards left that archipelago
to vague renown. No white man found again
its palm-frond havens for two centuries . . .
chimera, myth-like, Isles of Solomon. . . .

360

Mendana's ships moved off, and pressed upon

a stormy, uncertain passage to Callao,
Mendana and his pilots disagreeing,
chopping and changing the course upon the sea,
he, stubborn, grasping occasions to turn the bows
upon tangential south-east tacks, in hope
of finding a Continent which was not there —
the Great South Land which was not there, but lay,
more actual than myth of sunken Mu, 370
lapped in the beauty of its solitude;
gilded with lights of sunrise and sundown
richer, more real, than all the hues of fable,
and peaceful at night beneath the watching stars . . .
beyond, beyond, the knowledge of the West. . . .

They moved, Mendana's ships, through storms and fevers,
with growing toll to blindness, scurvy, death,
coming at last by separate ways to harbour
at Callao. . . .

conveying neither spice
nor gold with them, and bringing no report 380
of other beings than of savages . . .

telling of travail, tedious ocean months,
an epic voyage fruitful of no wealth. . . .

Yet, about the quays and taverns of Callao,
men talked with tongues of rumour. . . . Rumour thrilled
through all Pacific Coast communities,
conjuring visions, grasped by greedy hope,
of the Golden Clubs of Ramos, and of beds
of rivers golden, golden at Guadalcanal.

Rich in the mind were the Isles of Solomon. . . . 390

And bright were dreams of Terra Incognita.

[*Terra Incognita*]

*Populous, civilized Terra Incognita,
spired to the skies with diamond-brilliant temples
and golden palaces. . . .*

*The rare, skilled ornamentation of those buildings
is sundered by angry seas from Christian peoples.*

*The cities glitter with edifices of Trade,
spacious marts and fine, clean traffic-ways.
The people prosper in their own pursuits.*

*Goods and commodities are inexhaustible,
including gold
and silks and spice and lapis lazuli.*

400

*To begin to tell of treasure common there,
of wealth that is the accepted state of affairs,
is to propose an inventory that must dazzle unfinished,
for there is no end to the rife telling.*

*From all this we are separated by the leagues
of hostile waves.*

*Who will visit Terra Incognita?
Who will converse with the cultured heathen there? 410
Who will walk in the light of the wonderful temples,
where glimmer the rich-robed priests?
Who will tarry a guest in the palaces,
resplendent habitations of merchants and princes?*

*The waters keep us from Terra Incognita.
The vast Ocean, with its distances and storms,
deceives our captains and misleads our ships;
yet we must persist; we must convert
the heathen, and gain
the benefits of Trade.*

420

[Mendana's Second Voyage]

Mendana could not rest, for he had made
a voyage of renown and dire endurance,
discovering an archipelago
which stretched six hundred miles across the ocean,
believed the outposts of a continent.

Returning to the New World, from a voyage
to Spain, with charter for another venture,
he made all ready for departure. Then
his heart was high . . .

but officials intervened,
from jealousy, and flung him into jail.

A further fifteen years passed by, and Drake,
the Englishman, had entered the Pacific,
followed by Cavendish and Richard Hawkins. . . .

430

The Spanish power was on the wane before
Mendana sailed to found his colony.

Then upas-bloomed the most deplorable,
disastrous of all vaunted ocean ventures.

Four ships left Payta, for the Solomons,

amid a great display, and sound of viols,
with a company designed for settlement . . .

and Ferdinand de Quiros, in the days
before grey hairs and visionary ideals
marked him for laughter, sailed as Pilot-Major.

440

The Dona Isabel de Barreto, she
beautiful with a beauty that was hard,
selfish and wayward in extreme, young wife
of the ageing Captain General, old Mendana,
ruling and scolding him in his dotting dotage,
was with the fleet as evil genius. . .

Mendana missed the destination; thought,
until inspection proved assumption wrong,
new groups of islands — the Marquesas first
then Santa Cruz — to be the Solomons;
and at each group in turn a vain attempt
was made to found a Spanish colony.

450

[Horrors at Santa Cruz]

At Santa Cruz bloomed climax of grim horror. . . .

The Captain General sick, and having trouble
both with his people and the islanders. . . .

Urged by the Dona Isabel, he ordered
murder of insubordinate Camp Master,
Manrique, who died without confession, while
the soldiers, in a frenzy of blood-lust, lashed
and stabbed at innocent as well as guilty.

460

Even the Vicar waved a naked sword,
screaming, in crazed abandon, "Death to traitors!"

Mendana, hesitant and ill, observed
his soldiers daily making outrage, killing,
raping and pillaging among the natives,
and setting fire to island villages. . . .

Quiros, and one or two beside, protesting
at peril of their lives amid the orgy. . . .

470

Mendana weaker day by day, the fever
racking his frail body. . . .

When he died,
the brother of the Dona Isabel,
the scheming Don Lorenzo, took command;
then he, too, died; and then the Vicar died.

Men died like poisoned rats. Men died. The ships
sailed out from Santa Cruz in the Devil's claws,
moved from the Bay of Graciosa, which
the sick and dying seamen swore to be
a corner of Hell.

On Quiros' shoulders now 480
weighed full responsibility. He knew
nothing about these seas, and had no charts.

[Quiros]

He sought the Philippines, against strong winds
that came to thwart him, and, in rotten ships,
with a starving and dying company, whose vice,

evil deeds and misery shrieked affront
to his clear conscience.

Yet he pitied all
sick sufferers, and found a fierce resentment
blaze in his heart at the Dona Isabel,
whose soul was cruel — the Dona Isabel, 490
who, feeling no compassion for the crew,
washed out her clothes in water fallen so low
the soldiers swore she washed them in their blood.

She took the store-room keys, delivering them
in charge of her own servants; and she plotted,
in spleen of vanity, for death of Quiros,
who durst offend her with his reprimands.

But he was loyal even to this woman,
the wife of dead Mendana. He groaned, in anguish.

*“Her querulous, wilful, wayward spirit stabs
its lightnings through the storm-clouds of my brain.”* 500

*“The men are dying in their agony;
each day we give a body to the waves.
She knows, she hears, she sees. Her heart is stone.
She hears, but heeds not, groans of suffering men.”*

*“The storm is not more terrible than this woman,
this wisp of petted vanity, who keeps
within her cabin, lest the wind should sweep
her from the shuddering deck into the vast
chaotic void around. Her spirit rides,
in selfish dominance, superior,
above the shouting of the sky and ocean.
Within her cabin sits she, confident,*

510

*her mind more fortified with arrogance
than is the furious storm with thunderbolts,
her mood unbending, in petulance supreme,
unshaken by fear of death or sight of woe."*

Four ships had sailed from Payta, in Peru,
four ships had sailed to find the Solomons . . .

one, through the skill of Pilot-Major Quiros, 520
at last arriving in the Philippines
from a blood-bath cruise of murder, lechery,
and death by grim diseases amid horror . . .

another vessel limping, with its freight
of sick and dying, into Mendanao . . .

another lost to knowledge in the islands . . .

and yet another rumoured on a shore
unspecified, with all sails set, crew rotting.

[Quiros and Torres]

After a navigation which had earned
him just repute for skill and courage, Quiros 530
aspired to tear apart the veil across
the Great South Land — for he was confident
the Great South Land lay close to Santa Cruz.

He fanned the burning passion in his heart
for this discovery, that he should make it.

From Spain he went on pilgrimage to Rome,
where great geographers, who questioned him,
were much impressed by answers which displayed

knowledge, intelligence and piety;
and the Holy Father himself gave to his hands
a letter of exhortation to the King
of Spain: that Quiros should be sent with ships
to bring the Great South Land and all its heathen
within the holy compass of the Church.

540

In crimson and damask, with a golden fringe,
the Royal Standard burned above the ships
which Quiros led from Callao.

He himself
and all his officers were piously
attired in robes of friars, for his quest
blazed in his heart as service to his God.

550

The town of Vera Cruz shone in his mind,
beside the river called the River Jordan
in the Colony of New Jerusalem. . . .

Five days preceding Christmas, hot Peru
fell darkling back to eastward, as the sun,
late-sunken, drew flamboyant colours deep
in waves whose onslaught gradually drowned
the brightness, leaving a path of subdued light
a-glimmer from the bows of the three vessels
to westward.

When the blest day came, a feast
was spread at sea in homage to the Virgin
and her dear Son. At dawn, a cheer was sent
from the *San Pedro y San Paulo, capitana*,
over dark waters to the *almiranta*,
whose red side-light, swinging,
showed where she followed close upon her leader;

560

and farther was that cry relayed, until
the watch on the small *zabra* took it up,
and cheering ran like magic over the waves.

Throughout that merry Christmas day, the ships
sped onward, up and down among the rollers, 570
the *capitana* leading, like a bloodhound
in strength of sinew, with evident joy in action
and definite purpose. Close behind her pressed
the *almiranta*, with all her billowing
white beauty of sails new-dressed, her bowsprit sparkling
like a great needle, pointing out the way
that she must go; and, in the wake of her,
masts creaking, and shrouds singings, and sails full,
the little *zabra*, with equal determination,
kept pace and honour with the other two. 580

Onward they sailed, onward for week on week,
and, in their little craft, they mounted the waves
that towered above them, seeking to devour.

They called at many isles and sailed away,
Quiros recording on his much-thumbed charts
their names and places — San Valerio,
void of people or anchorage; the Virgins
and San Polonio, the same; and then
an isle of Indians with no harborage,
but only rock-fringed beach, so wild with surf, 590
so dangerous, the boats could not pull in.

[*The Search for Santa Cruz*]

They left this isle and came to San Bernado,
where they tried to find fresh water, but in vain.

Then, seeing that the need for this was great,
Quiros commanded that all haste be made
for Santa Cruz, whence they could sail upon
the larger venture, leaving the little islands
for petty discoverers to reconnoitre.

All hail for Santa Cruz, and thence all hail
for the Great South Land!

But there were some aboard 600
those ships who now had qualms
regarding dangers of the looming venture
through unknown oceans in search of Mystery.
What witchcrafts might not lurk amid the leagues
that seethed to Southward? Might not all the horrors
of legend old and new hold rank communion
with all the infernal spirits breathing fire,
observing bestial rites together in those
uncanny regions? Might not ghouls rejoice
to trap plain seamen with their power of spells 610
and torture them forever? Fears were spoken,
until heart-sickness spread — most notably
aboard the *capitana*.

Her whole crew
demanded that all sail be set, course pinned,
for far Manila, on the ocean track
well-known to voyagers. They deemed, quite truly,
that Santa Cruz was missed through some mistake
in reckoning. Their bold demand was made
by deputies who sought the commander's cabin
on the morning when they sailed from San Bernado, 620
and, as the ships
moved from the island with a brisk, warm wind
that blew them South, the *capitana's* crew,

hauling ropes and setting sails to order,
waited the word to change the course about
and tack towards the Line.

But, in his cabin,
Quiros stood, indomitable, determined,
his back to the deputies who stung his soul
with the impossible demand they made.

[*The Purpose of Quiros*]

His eyes gazed through a port-hole, and observed 630
the blue haze of horizon, the white flecks
of waves that swept on, on to the Unknown.
Before, he still believed, lay Santa Cruz,
and far beyond, within the South, his Dream.

He had listened silent to the speakers, silent
had risen from his desk and turned his back,
and now had stood long moments deep in thought,
reviewing his proud hopes, and not one instant
thinking of their abandonment.

Now those
who sought from him new orders deemed him won, 640
yet hesitant to give the order. They watched,
fidgeting and waiting for that word, to bear it
out to the expectant seamen. It never came.

At length, a ponderous frown on bushed brows drawn
taut from the temples with age, Quiros turned.
He was a mild man, though his courage flamed
strong as a lion's. His visionary purpose shone
even through his frowning, and, by force of that,
without harsh words indicting cowardice,

he showed his mind unflinching, saying: "Tell
my men there is no danger that brave hearts
need fear so much as failing in a duty
set plain before them. They are brave. I've seen
them battle with the ocean arduous months.
These notions are fantastically imagined.
They have faced dangers that could not be worse
with me, and have endured. They shall continue,
and everlasting glory shall be theirs."

650

Thereon the pilot of the *capitana*,
first of the deputies, a pale, slight man,
said to his Captain: "Is that, Sir, your command?
For this you will be sorry."

660

Quiros strode
towards him, anger mounting up, and cried:
"Dog, mutinous cur, think you to intimidate
the King's own servant, who seeks new worlds for
Spain?"

And to the others: "Signal Captain Torres —
a harder man than I — I'd have him keep
this traitor locked in chains; and lower a boat,
and see he's rowed across. With him away,
my men will find their senses. Go at once."

670

The expectant seamen received the news; they watched
the pilot rowed across the quarter-mile
of water to the *almiranta*, and murmured.

[Torres troubled]

. . . Captain Torres, walking his quarter-deck
with his chief officer, himself discerned

the message signalled by the Commander's flags;
and he was deeply troubled, for he knew
there had been mutterings of discontent
on his own ship, which he had sharply silenced
by the whip's end, the only certain cure. 680

. . . The ships resumed full canvas. All was quiet,
except for surging Ocean.

Next they came
in search for Santa Cruz, which Quiros thought
quite near at hand and soon to be discovered,
to the Island of Matanza, low in ocean,
and five leagues long.

A party went ashore
to search for water. After long trek through trees
that dropped the coolness of their shade from heavens
of dim dark-green luxuriance softly down, 690
the men had found no spring that bubbled sweetly,
no stream that sang. They were about to turn
their feet for shore again when, from their rear,
there came a scuffle and a flight of spears,
and Indians rushed upon them, shrieking madly,
in their strange tongue, a war-cry, hideous
and deafening. Like oily demons they
glinted grotesquely in the mellow lights
of the green forest, launching their lightning spears.

The Spaniards raised their muskets,
struck their flints and quickly sent a volley 700
that put the attackers to flight, except some wounded.

The Spaniards lifted up their wounded sergeant,
and, muttering prayers aloud, they sought the beach.

. . . As the Island of Matanza slipped from sight
over the sea-rim, far behind the ships,
Quiros was troubled, because no water yet
was found for storage, and because of doubts
which he would not give audience, but which stirred
uneasily within his soul beneath
its regular strong music of high purpose.

710

He did not know what accident had driven
him from the course marked out upon his charts.

Day followed weary day, till thirty-two
had passed in slow, intolerable succession,
while in those lonely leagues no land was seen,
although some drifts of wood and brilliant snakes,
floating with heavy currents, crossed the tracks
of the three vessels, showing the presence of land
on either side. Day followed weary day,
and the tepid months-old water of putrid barrels
was all the nectar apportioned to the seamen
to moisten their parched lips; and the sweet fruits,
laden aboard the ships at summer islands
were long since eaten or rotten; every damper
was foul, made with foul water; and all fish caught
was foul, boiled with it, or was fouler still
being fried with rancid fat. The dreary drag
of days was like a heavy cloud from Hell
that pressed with sweltering clamminess on all
the powerful-sweeping, lazy ocean miles;
the winds that filled the sails were furnace-breaths
that tortured the tired seamen, robbing them
of heart, instilling them with hatred for

720

730

a venture without ending, without hope
of anything but horror for the future.

The sailors of those ships moved at their tasks
in dull monotony of heart; and most
grew sickly, eating little, and broke in sores
that festered, attracting flies, which made men start
and snarl like dogs, lice-bitten, miserable. 740

[*Taomaco*]

Thus thirty-two days dragged their slow, slow course,
and at the end, when a new isle was sighted,
the hearts of all the seamen on those ships
were hardened towards Quiros, whose ambition
made them suffer
the indescribable pains of harsh travail;
were hardened, for, although the isle was fair,
giving sweet promise of soft idle days,
they had experience of the days before,
and were most fearful for the days to come. 750

That island stood the first and tallest of
many palm-girt sea-queens standing together,
bright and beckoning in those surging ways,
with sceptres of greenery asway against
the sky in languid gracefulness of motion;
yet, though the ships dropped anchor in a cove
of glittering creaminess, ringed round by palms
that droned the dreamy melody of the South,
the almost crazed relief the sailors felt
dispelled no whit their hatred for bold Quiros, 760
their terror of the Unknown oceans where
he long had led them, thought to lead them still.

At Taomaco, doubtings of old Quiros
returned, and would not be denied. In all
those leagues of sweeping sea, he vainly searched
for Santa Cruz. He would, however, keep
straight South and would, if Santa Cruz were missed,
the sooner find the Great South Land, for which
his whole heart yearned.

He learned from Taomai, 770
a native prince of Taomaco, who
came often aboard the *capitana*, that
there were great islands many leagues to South
with whom his people's foes of other islands
that lay midway between were often warring.

There, Quiros hoped, lay Terra Incognita
of which the voyagers of all the World
and all the sage geographers were dreaming.

[*Tierra del Espiritu Santo*]

The ships sailed South. They found a mighty coast,
a coast that seemed to run on, on and on
forever into distance.

Cries were hurled 780
from ship to ship: "All hail, the Great South Land! . . .
the Great South Land! . . .," and even the sailors, glad
to think their hard endurance crowned with glory,
rejoiced; even those aboard the *capitana*
rejoiced, acclaiming Quiros bold and fearless
to lead them through so many perils, till
the long-divined, long-sought, was found by them.

They anchored in a splendid bay, which measured
twenty-five leagues around. This Quiros named
the Bay de San Felipe y Santiago,
the Land named Tierra del Espiritu Santo.

790

Here they remained for fifty days, in which
the Bay and its surroundings were explored.

Many large rivers poured their silver floods
into the sparkling waters, where the ships
rocked at their ease, swinging upon their anchors;
many large rivers, tunnelling through ferns
and miles of luxuriant tropic greenery
all the wild distance from the savage heart
of a great jagged purple mountain range
that kept the coast majestic company.

800

The seamen had glad days awhile, forgetting
the dangers of the ocean, knowing comfort
of green grass underneath their feet, and coolness
of inland pools refreshing their tired bodies. . . .
They tasted the icy sweetness of clear springs.

[*The Native Women*]

They craved beside for other kind of pleasures;
but Quiros, noting fierceness in the natives,
commanded that no man have dealings with them,
but to avoid them — most of all their women.

810

This stricture caused dark discontent to smoulder
again among the Spanish seamen.

When
a party of them met, within the woods,

a band of natives late one afternoon,
they saw some women, several young and lovely,
wearing but fragile kirtles of parrot-plumage
about their supple, soft, sun-golden thighs,
and necklaces of scarlet shells about
their curving necks, falling upon their breasts,
compact and beautiful, alluring strongly.

820

There followed a fight, in which both native men
and sailors from the ships were gravely wounded,
but victory was for the stronger arms;
the sailors had the women.

The lash swung free,
on the *capitana*, *almiranta*, *zabra*.
The culprits were indulged no whit in mercy,
but whipped and flayed until their backs dripped blood.
Quiros for once was uncontrolled in rage;
and most of those who had defied his will
were of his crew. . . .

Then Torres, who had seen 830
his own men whipped severely, was amazed
at Quiros' blazing anger, that he needed
no exhortation to firmness. When he heard
two men were dead from lashing, he declared:
"The gentlest natures when stirred deeply down
by evil-doing may be, in revenge
and meting out of justice, far more stern,
more dreadful, more relentless, than those others
implacable against bad discipline."

Two bodies from the *capitana* dropped
beneath the moonlit waters of the Bay. . . .

840

[Flight of the capitana]

The next day passed. Another night and day passed by.

When yet another dawn smiled on the South, two ships alone were anchored in the Bay de san Felipe y Santiago.

Alarm was raised. "The *capitana* gone!"

[Disillusionment]

His duty of vain waiting over, Torres held consultation with the *zabra's* captain and officers of both the ships, upon the *almiranta*. It was decided then to leave the Bay and to extend enquiry some weeks along the shore of this great Land, that they might bear His Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain, a fuller knowledge of it. It was a brave decision, for the stores were fallen very low, and it was winter.

850

The ships sailed by a long and splendid coastline, their canvas sparkling, white against the palms, the purple heights, the fleckless azure sky; but, as the days fell backward, Torres doubted, from certain signs that met his practised eye, that they had found the Great South Land at all. In little time, he was convinced of failure. The Great South Land, the so long sought of men, was still unfound . . .

860

and now he ordered sail
for far Manila. In dumb gratitude,
the sailors leapt to do their leader's bidding.

[Torres Strait]

*Luis de Torres, on the "almiranta",
whose canvas was a wave-hugged sunset cloud,
looking back beheld,
beyond the glowing beauty of the "zabra",
the sea-track darken,
and sorrowed for brave Quiros.*

870

*"This broken quest I would he could have mended.
I doubt he'll ever, after this, be given
command of ships for seeking the Unknown."*

He moved a quick hand in gesture, and went below.

*With sails and rigging changing from colour to colour,
the "almiranta" and "zabra" went swinging on,
sweeping along the tropics to Manila,
while, beyond the port horizon, all unseen,
in unfound glory lay the Great South Land,
her sombre sandhills brightening in the glare
of a parrot sunset, then glooming under stars.*

880

BOOK SEVEN

The Dutch

[*The Enterprising Dutch*]

Where practical perception is the innate
and vigorous life of vision, vision shines
white light on speculation; makes no venture,
unless strategic, after probables;
expends itself in vapours of no fiction,
however valiant or magnificent;
barters no jot of reason for romance;
is no lost cause, no aching vanity,
no blind fanaticism, no feckless faith,
no spectacle of foolishness; and cannot
dissolve before its vital consummation.

10

Behold the sensible Dutch, who fight and pray
not as the Spaniards or the Portuguese. . . .

Behold the percipient Dutch, a stolid breed,
with no fantastic Mendana, fantastic Quiros,
seeking impossible utopias
even in face of dire experience.

Behold the determined Dutch,
wresting their independence
out of a terrible war;
defying the Inquisition;
defying the Dons of Spain;
finding a grim alliance
with the swaggering Protestant English privateers.

20

These Dutch were soldiers of Trade,
who, in effect, sent out their spies before them.

John Huyghen van Linschoten,
a Hollander of Haarlem,
trading at Seville. . . .

Linschoten, the Dutchman,
of considerable foresight,
resident at Goa,
meticulously keeping,
for five years at Goa,
his journal of notes. . . .

30

Smoke and cries in the air, and blood on the waters,
were nothing new to the men of the herring fleets,
the Beggars of the Sea . . .
and Time was big
with their preparedness.

40

Cornelius Houtman, voyaging
among the far Moluccas . . .
Van Neek, and many others,
returning richly laden home to Holland . . .

sporadic Dutch humour growing stale
in the latitude of Lisbon. . . .

Behold
the Protestant, practical Dutch, whose piety
conspired with business sense in enterprise
of rebels and interlopers, plundering,
exploring, trading, fighting,
defying Spain and the Holy Inquisition.

50

Behold
the men of Holland, seeking,
grasping, stern predominance;

taking their measure of dust and mould in the mouth,
their portion of sea-won horror, scurvy, death,
shipwreck, perished fortune,
as grist of knowledge, hard and salutary 60
to ambitious experiment,
not
as forlorn excrescences of Hope grown rank . . .

cutting losses on the North-East Passage;
turning South-East by the frigid Terra Gigantium,
paying full tribute for experience
of the angry Southern Sea. . . .

Five ships from Rotterdam
to sail around the World,
and another four from Rotterdam 70
to sail around the World . . .
but one of all, by cruel De Noort,
captained around the World.

For Gerritz, in Spanish bondage,
the snowy South Shetlands beguiled imagination,
and he would mutter to himself
about the Zuidland. . . .

[*Schouten and Le Maire*]

To Schouten and Le Maire, beating a cold way South,
the solid coast of Staten Land
was well named 80
for the Zuidland.

Discovering Cape Hoorn . . .

beating a warm north-west. . . .

Discovering the Tuamotus,
Le Maire believed that here, too, sprawled the Zuidland;
but Schouten, Master Mariner, set the course
toward New Guinea, and the South Land lay
westward, westward,

serene,

and in the mind of Jacob Le Maire,
who would have been surprised at the distance.

90

[The Dutch take the African Route]

Behold the resolute Dutchmen,
after winning through
mountains of sea the Antarctic Drift sent roving
and rearing in Drake Strait,
cutting their losses South-West . . .

storming the rich Moluccas, around
the Cape of Africa.

They cut their losses, these Dutchmen; ruthlessly,
they cut their losses.

100

They strove for earthly kingdom, not presuming
to fashion visions of imitation Heaven
on glittering savage coasts of the far New World.

[Dutch Materialism]

Behold the persistent, obstinate, stout-hearted,
audacious, obdurate, pertinacious Dutch,

with ruthless guile affront the sacrosanct
Monopoly of Trade; minds fervent for wealth,
yet not encumbered with visionary ecstasies,
not fuddled with gorgeous fancies of saints and angels
miraculous guarantors of dangerous ventures; 110
relying on simple, hardy seamanship,
keen eyes unsheathed of dream, the sharpened steel
stabbing and slashing to victory, the harsh
fire-stomached cannon announcing the will of Trade,
adamant in the sea-walled Netherlands.

The ships . . . the purpose of men . . .
the fire and the steel . . .
masts straining with strength . . . rigging
sinews singing success . . .
and cold mental fingers, fingers of covetousness. . . . 120

Here were the hands of Holland, reaching far,
the grasping hands of Holland, bloody with battle,
strangling, strangling
the trade of the Portuguese.

Here was no honour among thieves,
no quarter given;
and the bewildered natives of the East
were marshalled on either side,
and many struck down.

Fierce, brave merchant fighters 130
were Matalief, Pierterz, Wybrand, Van de Hagen
and many more,
forerunners and consolidators,
maintaining a ruthless vision,
instinct with Destiny,
defeating the Portuguese and taking over

their factories and stations; building up
the Dutch Monopoly; appropriating
the trade in nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves,
in all rare spice and Oriental wares.

140

Behold the ruthless Dutch, the dominant Dutch,
massacring erstwhile allies at Amboina . . .
here was no honour among thieves . . .
dismissing the English merchants from the islands. . . .

Behold the Dutch supreme
from Persia up to China,
forcing Spain to treaty,
their coffers overflowing with riches raped
from Borneo, Celebes,
Moluccas and Ceylon.

150

The methodical Dutchmen brooked no opposition
of native heathen, impressing them to service
not of the Church but Trade; not bothering
to reckon the souls of their slaves so many more
weak brethren given to God; not counting bodies
of Javans, Malays and Filipinos, slaughtered
on the altar of Mammon, as Heaven's mounting gain,
but simply as blood for blood in worldly conflict
for worldly profit, the winner taking all.

The Dutch were true to their vision of earthly
kingdom
jettisoning scruple for cold calculation,
cold calculation —
their practical perception, hard, cold and keen,
their vision's guarantee.

160

Unearthly radiance auras the ghastly, grim

phantasmagorias of conquistadores
compared with the stark acquisitiveness of Holland.

[*The Dutch East India Company*]

The five Companies — of Amsterdam,
Rotterdam,
Delft, Hoorn and Enkhuiza — 170
attaining amalgamation
and a Charter
from the States-General . . .

the Honourable Councillors of the new Company
proceeded to business,
choosing their representatives shrewdly, in view
of the necessity for profit . . .

censorious
of all avoidable extravagance . . .
yet generous to a fault 180
touching safety of trade,
providing arms and armaments in full measure. . . .

While not unsympathetic with discovery,
derisive of uneconomical, visionary propositions . . .

careful to suppress investigation beyond
the Company's capacity
to appropriate results.

[*The Dutch and Australia*]

Austere, restrained, yet enviable, is the claim
of Holland to honour in discovery;

but, based on virtue of some enterprise,
and drab and vivid fortuitous circumstance,
the ghosts of Dutchmen haunt Australia's Coast —
Cape York to Shark Bay, Leeuwin and the Bight.

190

[Janszoon]

The little pinnacle, *Duyfken*, spread her sails,
and veiled with silver lace of spray, before
a favourable wind, moved out of Bantam . . .

moved, bobbing, over the waters of Arafura,
and along the southern shores of the Papuas. . . .

Her skipper, Willem Janszoon, trained his mind
upon this quest for rumoured spice and gold:
scanning the southern coast of wild New Guinea
for nearly a thousand miles, without a sign;
then striking — where a southward trend of land
gestured a fickle promise of constancy —
across an open passage . . .

200

to be deceived,
deceived and robbed of any mead of glory
as opener of a gate to the fair South Sea;
discoverer of the Great South Land, who could
never have found the Discovered in the mind.

The dawns rushed lavishly on him then, as molten
surging of gold that dazzled from the east
about the plunging *Duyfken*. The vessel roved,
with radiant canvas, into a Gulf of Gold,
beside a Coast whose beaches and mangroves burned
with myriad colours, sending sparks to heaven —
bright birds, bright birds, scarlet and vivid gold!

210

White-gold, through fiery days, would shimmer the
beaches.

The westering sun poured treasure over the mangroves,
and out of the little creeks, as if responding
now to the smouldering east for gifts of dawn; 220
and far across the glimmering Gulf would tumble
a brilliant stream of opal, ruby, gold,
for covering with the velvet cloth of night,
the velvet cloth all studded with diamond stars.

[*The Glory Missed*]

But Willem Janszoon, servant of the Company,
eschewed all thought of treasure he could not cram
close in the *Duyfken's* hold, and was uneasy.

A cloud of foreboding piled about his heart. . . .

Sullen, distrustful of this Coast's wild beauty,
his instinct sought to blot the beauty out. 230

Something was here he could not understand,
a brooding aura of Mystery, a grave
and inexplicable age that yearned with youth.

The rife and splendid spirit of the Coast
disturbed and blanched his stolid Dutch complacence,
probing its fingers of strange, primaeval wonder
uncomfortably into the cloud about his soul.

You, Willem Janszoon, Dutchman, you who left
the first specific record of a visit
upon the lonely coast of the Great South Land, 240

knew not what you had found. Indeed, you lacked
the inspiration for discovery.

And yet we owe you honour.

Your ghost shall thrive,
a favourite in our history books, a wanderer,
blinded to your renown and that Coast's glory
by concentration on your insufficient
and drab conception of reality,
off-shore the Great South Land, where you can find
no water or provisions, and observe
wild, cruel black savages who guard a soil 250
that does not beckon you, fierce savages
attacking your queasy crew and killing some,
so that you turn again, in great disgust,
at Cape Keer Weer; you turn and sail for Bantam.

[*The Northern Coast*]

*The men are warlike on our Northern Coast.
Our Northern Coast is wild and savage Country,
which offers no easy path to mines of metal,
no paradisaical entry to groves of spice. . . .
Entry is through harsh travail, willingness 260
to bear the heat and know the meaning of thirst
entry is through the eyes that brim with wonder,
the ears that are enraptured, and the blood
that leaps to the beauty of unrivalled sunsets;
entry is through the heart, and entry is
into a rich and strenuous mood of peace.*

*To find the peace of this great Continent,
at Carpentaria or in the Bight,*

or anywhere on many thousand miles
of lone Australian shoreline, or upon
interior plains and ranges, is to hold
abundant wealth more precious than the ore
the Dutchmen sought, more fragrant than the spice
of all their conquered islands and their dreams.

270

The Dutch paid scant attention to treasure not
computable in guilders, or other coin
acceptable in trade and good for gain
of worldly possession and power . . . and Willem Janszoon
was no unusual Dutchman. Sturdy, practical,
with vision of tangible profit, he spared small thought
for finer, more enduring satisfaction.

280

[Carstensz]

No, not an unusual Dutchman; true to breed;
needing no genius for anticipation
of Carstensz views.

When Governor Speult despatched
Jan Carstensz, with the *Arnhem* and the *Pera*,
to follow the *Duyfken* after twenty years
upon the self-same Coast, that captain found
it wanting in allure, "a barren tract,
lacking in fruit trees, and providing nothing
for use of men — its natives abject wretches".

Jan Carstensz, not an unusual Dutchman, missed
the Strait of Torres — "Drooge Bocht," said he,
"a shallow bay, no good for navigation."

290

No, not an unusual Dutchman, Carstensz sailed

within the region of the Great South Land,
his practical mind bankrupt of inspiration,
to be deceived of any mead of glory
as opener of a gate to the fair South Sea;
visitor to the Great South Land, who knew
not that it was the Great South Land he saw . . .

who, even had he marked it on the chart 300
distinct from coastline of the known Papua,
could not have found its beauty in his mind.

“The natives,” he said, “are foolish and ungrateful,
for, when we sought to rescue some of them
from their disgusting habitat, they fought
ferociously and quite destroyed our purpose,
preferring their poverty to proper living.”

No trafficking Dutchmen, no, nor Englishmen
becoming the while despoilers of the Land,
could hope to enter 310
the soul of this great Country and its People,
whose poverty was wealth such as the vain
and warring European Nations lost
through internecine jealousy and greed.

The *Arnhem* deserted Carstensz, left that Coast,
and, blown by strong east winds across the Gulf,
discovered its western shore, and gave the names
of Speult and Arnhem to its spacious beauty.

The *Pera* sailing on, passed Cape Keer Weer,
came to a salty inlet Carstensz called 320
the Staten River . . . and from here he took
the *Pera* on her voyage of return.

More Dutchmen visited the Northern Coast,
but always greed for gain or means to gain
eschewed true knowledge, or desire for knowledge
that could not be assessed in goods or guilders;
and the Great South Land, bright-souled with sun and
bird,
calm and inscrutable with star and bushland,
baffled and bluffed their lustful egotism.

Australia nourished her secret soul of wonder — 330
deceived and lured all Dutch from Torres Strait,
to disappoint their cold materialism.

A century after the *Duyfken* missed a way
about Cape York and into the fair South Sea,
Dutch captains navigating in those regions
still made the same mistake . . . and now reported
conviction that the seas of Carpentaria
cut through New Holland, which was but a chain
of islands, and would lead a ship
that stayed a course into the fair South Sea. 340

The dogged persistence of Dutch captains,
fulfilling instructions, beating
north-east past Madagascar,
at last gave out before the gathered fury
of stubborn westerlies, and Hendrick Brouwer
was swept four thousand miles on a longer course
that led more expeditiously to Java.

The Honourable Councillors of the Company,
alert in economy, agreed,
“Advantage should accrue from this accident” . . . 350
made cautious experiment with a single ship
that beat all records for the outward passage;
then gave instruction that all Company ships
should sail that way in future.

Eastward, eastward! Ship after ship from Holland
sailed eastward from the Cape four thousand miles,
in southern latitudes, before they turned
due north to Java and the Isles of Spice. . . .
Dutch ships with cargoes of treasure — gold to pay 360
officials in Batavia, and silks
and gorgeous raiment for officials’ wives —
ship after ship bound eastward from the Cape . . .

[Hartog]

and Dutchmen found a lonely loom of Land —
Dirck Hartog first, the *Eendracht* heaving to,
months out of Amsterdam, behind an island . . .

behind Dirck Hartog Island, on the verge
of regions all unknown.

Here Hartog had
his seamen nail a pewter dish, inscribed
with details of his visit, on a post . . .

a post that slowly rotted on the shore — 370
the *Eendracht* gone from the coast of Eendrachtsland —
rotted through eighty years of sun and storm,
beneath the noonday kaar of crows, beneath

the midnight blaze of stars,
till Willem de Vlamigh came upon that coast
to find the dish preserved,
and bore it back, amazed, to Amsterdam.

Company captains learning the shape of Land,
looming, looming from regions all unknown. . . .

[*New Holland*]

Behold New Holland, lone Land Looking West; 380
trended from Javan Seas, and up from cold
grey rollers leisurely sweeping from the Pole
into the sombre Bight and dashing sprays,
in flurry of whiteness over Leeuwin;
Coast of the arid dunes and sunken rocks;
Old Shoreline of a thousand wandering ghosts
of vanished ships and vanished sailormen;
Coast of the endless mutter and shout and sigh
of waves of Ocean, telling over and over 390
the mysteries of the Past — the landfalls made,
perhaps by men of Cathay and Cipangu
and Portugal and Spain. . . . What say the waves,
the waves of the Ocean, in conference with the Coast
forever, in language of mutter and shout and sigh?

Came unknown captains in forgotten ships,
passing to the Moluccas, or foundering,
victims of hurricane seas or gnashing rocks,
or crunched in the cruel jaws of reefs that hid
beneath the mirror of conspiring waters,
abetted by stars and the smile of the thoughtless moon. . . .

Coast of New Holland, holding many secrets

that never shall be known to men; Old Coast,
replete with feast of tragic yesterdays,
teasing our curiosity with signs
of broken and rotten ships of olden time,
and relics of yesterday — the rusted cannon
just showing from the sand; sea-eaten rivets,
green copper fish-hooks, pewter drinking mugs,
dragged to the surface; salvaged coins that bear
inscriptions of Holland, Spain and Portugal; 410
and human skulls, whose lifeless sockets gaze,
without response, at our endless wondering.

[*Ghosts of Yesterday*]

Dead men have known the rumble and shriek of gales
about the wooden walls of shuddering ships;
sailors, whose skulls and broken bones lie covered
by drifting water and drifting coastal dune,
have stood at the helm on ships of old, and hauled
hard on the cutting ropes and chaffing canvas;
dead men have clambered in life, long, long ago, 420
on rigging and cross-trees, fought with storm,
looked into the fogs and into the shining distance
of clear blue days and quiet moonlight nights.
Dead men have chanted the salty songs of the sea,
on deck in the winds, in the fo'c's'le's tallow-glow. . . .
Dead men have talked on the waters of vanished time,
and the waves of the wild New Holland Coast have
learned
their utterances and oaths . . .

lost conversation,
hustled in scraps of flotsam and jetsam, carried
hither and thither upon the wallowing waters,

toppled on wave-crests, smothered with wreaths of
weed, 430
cast high on the sands with spray-burst, whispered over
the shelly shingle in ripples, and crashed upon
the tide-bared reefs and flung to the wings of gulls
that veer and glide and sweep, and hurled to the strong
far-flying winds that hurtle them high to the clouds . . .
the voices of sailors of old that haunt forever
the Coast with the words they spoke in casual mood,
in oath or jest, or obedient to command,
in quarrel, in terror, or screamed in agony. . . .

"Tonight, we're fifty weeks at sea."

"We left 440
at dusk from Rotterdam, and, as we went,
the lights came up in the town. . . ."

"I gave my girl
a royal time, and many, many gifts. . . ."

"First spend the money, then put out to sea."

"Give me a smoke, old messmate. . . ."

"What's that noise?"

"There's trouble on deck."

"We're wrecked."

"Christ, let me get away!"

Confusion, horror, on New Holland's Coast . . .
and ordinary conversation. . . . The waves, the waves. . . .

Waves tell of forgotten ships that sailed beside 450
the lone New Holland Coastline long ago,
finding it sombre sometimes, or like a wraith
across the tumble of grey-green, white-flecked waves,
or as a Land on fire with dawn or sundown.

Waves washed around the ships that sailed that way,
with the lonely Coast of New Holland to starboard or
larboard,
and showing sometimes. . . .

Coast of New Holland, Coast
well mapped by the canny Dutch for good of trade. . . .
Coast of the Great South Land, which Dutchmen failed
to mark as such, discouraged by lack of spice 460
and gold or silver, obvious and easy to gather . . .

sailing so near, so near, not recognizing
the Great South Land, having no mind for what
in fact it was — a glory to be wooed
and won at last, though not by men of Holland.

[Houtman's Abrolhos]

The *Zeewulf* found, to north of Eendrachtsland,
low-lying country of tremendous length:
“There all our maps show only open sea;
we were the first observers in this part,
and only the Lord knows whether that wraith of shore 470
is one continuous land or chain of islands.”

Reporting another landfall, far to south,
Commander Frederick Houtman was excited:
“We came upon the fabulous Land of Beach.

I named that portion of it D'Edelsland.
The surf was heavy; seas forbade a landing;
our cargoes were costly, so we stood for Java.

"Upon the way, we saw deceptive islands,
with lurking reefs, which I have called Abrolhos."

Houtman's Abrolhos! . . . maze of reefs and islets, 480
low, coral-built, beside New Holland's Coast;
Houtman's Abrolhos, offering first obstruction
to long green rollers from the African shores,
great ocean-rollers pulverized to clouds
of white and drifting spray above the grim,
drear graveyard of the ships that perished there —
Batavia, Zuytdorp, Zeewyck, ships of Holland;
and other vessels of more modern times,
British, American — the *Ocean Queen*,
Cochituate, Hadda, Marten and *Ben Ledi*, 490
the *Evelyn Mary* and the steamer, *Windsor*. . . .

The myriad sea-birds thronging, during Spring,
to occupy Abrolhos rookeries,
the Mutton-birds and Noddy and Sooty Terns,
will flee the place before the winter gales
strike in their icy and destructive fury,
lashing the low scrub, now untenanted . . .
and modern workmen who, the summer through,
dig for the guano of the lone Abrolhos,
return to the mainland for the bitter months . . . 500
but the bones and the ribs of forgotten ships lie buried
beneath the waters or tangled on the reefs;
and the ghosts of human travail linger still,
the whole year round and through the centuries,
their voices muttering in the wash of waves,
and calling in the shouting of the winds,

their sorrows surging in the coloured end
of summer days, or weeping in the bleak
and wretched wakening of winter dawns. . . .

[*Pelsart*]

Come to the Abrolhos on fair-weather nights, 510
with moonlight clear on a gentle swell of sea
that froths in dreamy cream about the reefs,
and the moon and stars alive upon the waves;
and witness, with eyes that pierce the crowded years,
the ship *Batavia*, out of Texel, driving
straight for the waiting shoals. . . .

To cry a warning
is hopeless, for the tragedy is accomplished
three centuries ago; you will but see
harsh re-enactment of a fate achieved, 520
will hear the panic of cries and useless warnings,
will note the crash and shudder, the ship gripped fast
upon the grinding reef, with Francis Pelsart,
the captain, startled from sick-bed, on the deck,
shouting emergency orders, hounding the men
to cast the guns away and ease the load,
but all to no avail. . . . The Abrolhos has
the *Batavia* in its grip, and shows no mercy,
but rather a brighter glint on its fields of froth
stretched brilliant under the moon, but seen too late. . . .

[*Mutiny*]

Harden the mind in brutal and callous mood, 530
if you would linger but a part of the days
and weeks of treachery, terror and blood that follow. . . .

The Captain, Pelsart, gone to furnish succour,
away three months . . .

while, on the Abrolhos Islands,
Jerom Cornelis played the part of the Devil,
a ghoulish Captain-General of Anarchy. . . .

O the scarlet coats of the cut-throat mutineers,
the scarlet coats with lace of silver and gold!

the leaping and smouldering fires of precious stones
and jewels, rifled from the Company's chests!

540

*The pomp and pride, evil show and assurance!
An extravagant, derelict, sinister intrusion
this from the Western World, prophetic upon
the fringe of the Great South Land. . . .*

*A rampant time
of plunder, murder and rape. . . .*

*Drunken vice,
lewd lust and vile debauchery strode, harsh
flamboyant invaders into the solitude,
and there raved out, upon the lonely islands,
their first foul tenure of the South Land's soil.*

Three months of horror. Then, suddenly, Pelsart came ⁵⁵⁰
with retribution. Stretch-neck bodies dangled
from Company yard-arm and on island gibbets.
Recovered treasure was shipped in Company hold,
although some rested still
too heavily on the sea-bed, tax on the Company
levied by the Abrolhos with the *Batavia's* bones
and incomputable price of human woe,

paid in agonizing orgy of crime,
courage, despair and hope, upon the Islands.

[*Loos and de Bye*]

Pelsart left the Abrolhos to its ghosts, 560
and, voyaging back to Java, paused to set
two criminals ashore upon the mainland —
Wooter Loos and Jan Pilgrom de Bye,
unwilling phantoms of the Western World,
to wander in desolation of heart and mind.

It was thought they might be rescued, in later years,
to afford the Company a true report
of what New Holland bore,
but they, unready ghosts,
returned no more to their homes, no more to their kin. 570
They met their fate in regions of Mystery.

Wooter Loos,
perhaps you would sooner have had your hands
cut off at the wrists,
and hang from the neck at the end of a rope,
than endure what you then endured.

Jan, would you sooner have made a one
of the corpses left on the gallows at Seal's Island
than find your actual fate?

What was the doom of these 580
Batavia mutineers, these two most lonely
of outcasts on a Coast the Dutch abhorred?

They were no fitting visitors to that shore.

They looked around them aghast, in terror, despair.
They searched for water; they may have died of thirst;
they may have drunk sea water, then roved, raving,
frothing in madness;
or, striking too far inland, may have blundered
around in circles, throwing off their clothes
amid the sparse and stunted scrub, falling
at last, clawing and biting the dust
beneath the sudden
drifting shadows of crows
that soon would outmanœuvre the busy ants . . .

590

or were these outcasts of the West
succoured and tended by the Land's Own People?
were they adopted by a family group
of wandering dark savages, whose eyes
were full of flies, yet kindly with compassion?
or did they, soon or late, unwanted strangers,
feel long, fire-pointed spears in their bodies?
did they stumble on sacred places?
did they rob the weirs?
did these solitary, desperate men,
unwitting, offend the immemorial laws
and die for that?

600

[Shreds of Tiding]

*Sometimes a wisp of spray on lonely coast,
or a coil of sand lashed sea-ward by the wind,
sometimes a sigh of the wind in the scrubland night,
releases a shred of a tiding of Loos and de Bye. . . .*

610

*Sometimes the call of a crow,
the smite of the sun,*

*sometimes the flash of the snake through fallen bark,
releases a shred of a tidings of Loos and de Bye. . . .* 610

"They knew me . . . and me . . . and me. . . .

*"I the Spray, and I the Sand, and I the Wind,
and I . . .*

"went with them." . . .

*The Spray, the Sand, the Wind, the stunted Scrub
cry, "We, moreover,
alone have tidings of the seventy-five
who reached the shore from the wreck of the
'Vergulde Draeck'."* 620

*The Spray, the Sand, the Wind,
the stunted Scrub,
the Stars and the Moon and the Sun . . .
"We alone have tidings
of three men questing from the 'Goede Hoop'
in search of the seventy-five . . .
and the eight who followed the three. . . ."*

[Cape Leeuwin; Nuytsland; De Wittsland]

*The Leeuwin found a lone, low-lying Coast,
covered with dunes of sand.*

The Gulden Zeepaert 630
*followed the Leeuwin's track, sailed far beyond it,
eastward beyond the south-west cape
of the Great South Land.*

The Captain, Francois Thyssen, had on board
an Extraordinary Councillor of the Indies,
the Honourable Pieter Nuyts, and brought the ship
eastward along the Bight a thousand miles,
to the Coastline which he gave the name of Nuytsland.

The *Vyanen* was driven on the shore
of drab North-West New Holland;
refloated by God's mercy, after throwing
her cargo of pepper and copper overboard —
and in sufficient shape to sail to Java,
examining, upon the way,
two hundred miles of barren coast, De Wittsland.

640

[*Van Diemen*]

See Anthony Van Diemen, Governor-General
of the Dutch East Indies; this unusual Dutchman,
grand in initiative for exploration;
inheriting Coen's genius for enquiry,
but bringing an added zest, bringing a vision
of Truth as well as profit and expedience;
Prince Henry the Navigator of the Dutch,
informing practical aims with warm desire
to embellish the mind with knowledge; planning surveys
on the coast of drab, unpromising New Holland,
in hope new expeditions might reveal
regions of green fertility; instructing
his captains to act with kindness and forbearance
towards all native peoples; this humane,
inquisitive and imaginative Van Diemen,
wondering whether there were not a passage,
despite the well-known contrary reports,

650

660

south of New Guinea to the Southern Sea . . .
or through a strait in Carpentaria. . . .
Regard this high-souled son of Holland, thwarted
in hapless circumstance, or handicapped
with ordinary Dutch to execute his plans,
captains who, while possessing doggedness
and courage, lacked the spark of genius
to bring brave schemes to fairest consummation. . . . 670

Van Diemen saying, at Batavia:
"Pool may be at the Bocht this very minute.
Investigation there . . ."

Two thousand miles
to east the body of Gerrit Thomasz Pool
lay gashed and murdered by the savages
of wild New Guinea, and Drooge Bocht remained
a query for Van Diemen, while the ships
moved home by shores of North Van Diemen's Land.

[*Visscher*]

See Governor-General Anthony Van Diemen
and the pilot, Visscher, at Batavia, 680
bent over a table of maps. Their fingers trace
the contours of New Holland all the way
from Arnhem Land, De Wittsland, Eendrachtsland
to D'Edelsland and Nuytsland, and there halt. . . .

Again, they trace the south New Guinea shores
eastward on tracks of Janszoon, Carstensz, Pool,
and, following pause and query, cross the Bocht
to the Coast of Cape Keer Weer and Staten River,
halting again, uncertain, in the Gulf. . . .

Behold the pilot, Visscher, of mature
and brilliant thought, at elbow of Van Diemen,
planning to find remaining unknown parts
of the terrestrial globe; planning to drive
deep South to latitude of fifty-four,
and then sail eastward to the longitude
of east New Guinea and the Solomons,
in hope of coming to the Great South Land;
alternatively, forsaking that cold course,
to make due North, in latitude of Nuytsland,
to Islands of St. Francis and St. Peter,
and thence pursue New Holland's Coast wherever
it might extend — perhaps to join New Guinea
or show a Strait between. . . .

690
700

[*Tasman*]

Behold Chief Pilot
Frans Jacobszoon Visscher, later, setting forth
with Abel Janszoon Tasman — the Governor-General
bidding them godspeed. . . .

In those first days,
bound to Mauritius over the Indian Ocean,
the *Heemskerck* and *Zeehaen* moved in clouds of fog,
appearing to one another as phantom vessels,
or losing sight, so that they had to fire
muskets and guns to keep in company. . . .

710

Symbolic beginning of a famous voyage. . . .
First Europeans venturing in the grey
and icy waters southward of New Holland,
the sailors of those vessels, lashed with hail

and stung with flying snow, on heavy seas,
felt no high inspiration for the voyage,
suffering physical pain from the bitter climate.

Forsaking the bitter climate was well done;
but how explain advice of the vaunted Visscher 720
to sail in latitude of forty, miss
the Coast of Nuytsland, not to follow on
the work of skipper Thyssen? Was this Visscher,
geographer of brilliance, jealous lest,
proceeding to chart remainder of a coast
of known existence and reputed barren,
the venture should relinquish larger renown
attending first report of hypothetical
Terra Australis thought to lie elsewhere?

Visscher, you Dutchman, changing one guess for 730
another!
making a compromise of ten degrees!

The Great South Land of your geographer brain
was not for finding; nor was the Great South Land,
so real, so grave, so bright, for you or Tasman —
that dependable but uninspired good ship-man,
sound manager of a war-yacht and a flute
and crews that manned them, but a chancy captain
for great discovery. . . . The Great South Land
was not for either of you, unless you flung 740
your hazard of ten degrees and fancy's figment,
its coasts strung none knew whither, out of your minds,
and turned the *Heemskerck* and the *Zeehaen's* bows
straight for the job that waited to be done.

But, Visscher and Tasman, you Dutchmen, you despised
the sombre and vivid mystery of a Land

your countrymen had come, through four decades
of harsh experience and growing habit,
to designate as inhospitable,
unutterably barren, without fruit,
where lived but miserable black savages.

750

You had no faint conception that the natives,
so frequently reviled, lived richer lives
of cultured brotherhood than all but few
of your compatriots, than all but few
in Europe's busy cities; you could not know
that even the meanest dark initiate
of Sacred Ceremony held in his mind
a stronger and more radiant knowledge of life
than any of the dull sailors in the fo'c's'les
of *Heemskerck* and *Zeehaen*, ships that dashed the
spray
beyond the periphery of the South Land Bight.

760

Yet, Tasman and Visscher, you were daring; you
had courage in your hearts, strength in your minds;
you were no petty explorers, but determined
and enterprising voyagers, whose faults
were those of all your Nation; vision you had,
like all your countrymen, astringent vision,
excluding from the soul's affinity,
in many a vigorous earthly undertaking,
concepts appearing void of earthly profit . . .
and so you followed no forbidding shore
with eager hope, but rather the irony —
less fabulously foolish, but irony —
of Ferdinand de Quiros' Continent.

770

With vision more heavily cumbersome for exploring
than were Manila Galleons for manoeuvring
easily on the sea, you, Tasman and Visscher,
yet merited some fair insignia
conferred by Fate approving of your hard,
so staidly hyperbolic, enterprise;
and fitting it was that, in your blundering
assault on the Unknown, you found the shores
of Southern Van Diemen's Land; in character
that you should then forsake their northern trend
to strike into the vast Pacific and be
deceived, uncertain, in wishful-thinking, on
the beautiful coast of Staten Land, New Zealand.

Men of the *Heemskerck* and *Zeehaen*
in later years would tell
of the grey Coast of Van Diemen's Land,
far South,
the beating off and on along that Coast,
the landings in one or two places,
the excellent timber and vegetation;
but also alarming matters.

790

"There is a race of Giants in that Country.
There is no doubt; this is no Spanish story.
Footholds were plain to see, five feet apart,
cut in the great-girthed trunks of lofty trees,
where the Giants must have climbed to sack the
nests. . . .

800

"There were mighty holes
burnt in the trunks of trees
for fire-places. . . ."

"I was carpenter on the *Zeehaen*. I swam ashore,
when the surf was much too heavy for the boats;
I swam ashore at the order of Commodore Tasman,
before we left that Country,
and there set up a post that bore our Flag,
memorial to any who might follow.
I confess I went with trepidation — 810
not through fear of the surf; I was a strong swimmer;
but, although we did not see them,
there were natives watching in the woods;
they were beating gongs, and we had evidence
that they were Giants. None of us were sorry
to leave that Country."

Heemskerck and *Zeehaen*, vessels of old time,
fitted for exploration, your phantoms wander
forever the wide expanse of sea about
the Great South Land, but never come upon
its mainland shores. . . . 820

Heemskerck and *Zeehaen*, beating
about the grey South of Tasmania,
Van Diemen's Land; and so far out to sea
that land was barely visible . . . and sailing
the windy Tasman Sea to coast beside
the mountains of New Zealand, Staten Land . . .
and pressing a wide way home along the shores
of north New Guinea — Tasman, Commodore,
upholding Carstensz' name of Drooge Bocht. . . .

Yet, Abel Janszoon Tasman, you removed 830
forever from the map that fancy-figment
of Marco Polo myth, Lucach or Beach,
and, though in blind circuitous manner, fixed
more surely limits to New Holland shores . . .

showed Ocean washing to the South and East
of lone, oh lone New Holland — Great South Land.

[*The Phantom Dutch*]

*Dutch names surround New Holland's Coastline still. . . .
Forever, along six thousand lonely miles
of Coast, north, west and south, of the Great South Land,
ghost colonies of Dutchmen hold command, 840
irrefutable by the charter of History,
maintained by sunken and rusted cannon — sufficient
to prove impregnable their ethereal substance.*

BOOK EIGHT

The French and the English

[*De Gonneville*]

The Sieur de Gonneville, nobleman of France —
returned from voyaging — enlivened the salons
with tales of wonder concerning a Land beyond
the Cap de Bonne Esperance.

“The winds
took charge of the ship, and bore us many leagues
upon strange waters to a Continent
no white man saw before; and, all the way,
I kept a careful reckoning in my journal.
The Continent of Southern India
is my discovery. It is a place
of incomputable untouched gold and spice.
The tribes of Indians there, though savage now,
are of a type to welcome Christian teaching
and cultured arts, prepared to join in trade.
This is my Native Prince, whose visage shows
a natural dignity, and disposition
to speak the truth.”

10

The eyes of de Gonneville
would stab with challenge for his listeners.
“Do any doubt me?”

People knew him well —
brave but romantic, headstrong, full of fervours
that somewhat turned his head, coloured his life
with favourite colours, made his dreams come true
in his own mind.

20

But, then, there was the Native Prince,
as witness of the truth. There stood the Native Prince.
His colour was not imaginary, but real.
He wanted to return to his native land,
which must be real enough, wherever it was,
yet where it was, or what it was . . . who knew?

The friends of the Sieur de Gonneville much desired
to credit his story, would have felt assurance, 30
because of the Native Prince, to think it true,
except for the loss of the journal, setting out
details of latitude and longitude,
which would have made corroboration easy.
The lack of the journal was a circumstance
which made them humour, not encourage, the story. . . .

The Native Prince was anxious to return
to his native land. There often came to his eyes
a look of pain, nostalgia for his people,
to whom he wished to bring enlightenment
from France when fair occasion offered. Yet
what could be done? Could anything be done?
The lack of the journal was a hard condition
that even de Gonneville could not repair.
He had promised the Prince return. He did his best
to make amends for the sorry trick of Fate
that bound up a dream and exiled a Native Prince,
who, comely of bearing, of quick intelligence,
agreed to statements made about his country.

This native Prince from Southern India 50
was well esteemed, and very well looked after.
He married into de Gonneville's family,

had issue, and died at last in honourable exile.

Time stalked surely over the family vaults
of the aristocratic de Gonnevilles of France,
and the ghosts of de Gonneville and the Native Prince
rose, after a space of sleep, to walk abroad . . .
but that was not to be until the zeal,
the pride, the power of Portugal and Spain
were humbled, and the enterprising Dutch
in turn beheld their empire vanishing.

60

[*The Fool's Paradise of Spanish America*]

When the Southern Sea was a Spanish Mystery, bounding
— with visions and perils, clouds of glory and darkness —
the threads of the tracks of Manila Galleons,
one question was not raised on the Pacific Coast,
not asked aboard the Galleons lumbering
to far St. Lazarus and back, not thought of
by servants of the Spanish King, pursuing
their fervent enterprises through that Sea.

Queries were frequent, variously treated
with hope — or caution from experience,
on the disposition and wealth of Terra Australis.

70

But one thought was unthinkable to Spaniards.

When comes another Magellan, and whence comes he?

Magellan of Portugal belonged to Spain,
by virtue of his action — and his bequest,
written so large in the Spanish mind, although
for summary change before the bar of Fate.

When comes another Magellan, and whence comes he,
courageous enough to stem the Southern Strait? 80

Established firmly in America,
the Spaniards did not think of another such,
Spanish or Portuguese or heretic English.
Guiding their treasure trains across the Isthmus,
laden with freight assessed in the City of Kings
and other West Coast Cities, they felt secure
from thieving inroads on their springs of wealth.

[Drake]

But the *Pelican*, *Elizabeth* and *Marigold*,
far, far from Plymouth Sound, three English ships
under command of Captain-General Drake, 90
came plunging and straining through the grey-green
waters
of icy, grim, gale-swept Magellan Strait. . . .

The plan of the voyage was to make a close
inspection of the coast of Terra Australis
at thirty degrees, Lucach or Beach, as shown
on Ortelius' Mappamundi . . . rich in gold . . .
and to follow that coast north-west to the Moluccas.

The Lord High Admiral, the Earl of Lincoln,
and other shrewd promoters made subscription
of fifty pounds in all to purchase presents 100
for Lords of Countries to be Visited.

The venture was interloping — a scheme to rob
the Spaniards of riches from that Ocean
to which they laid sole claim; and Francis Drake,
with the Queen's connivance, had it fixed in mind

to seek direct reprisals against Spaniards
whenever chance appeared. . . .

The westerlies

that drove John Winter with the *Elizabeth*,
under dark fury, back to Magellan Strait,
and swallowed the foundering *Marigold* in storm, 110
precluded all western passage for Francis Drake
below the latitudes Magellan sailed;
and Drake — he was not sorry.

The *Pelican*

a lone and sturdy flagship with tumble-home sides,
made north in the Spanish sea-way, bent on plunder.

Drake had forgotten the coast of Terra Australis.
His indefatigable purpose was to seek
no chart-guess will o' the wisp; his destiny
and England's burned in hot sure undertaking
of battle with foes whose gold was in their hands. 120

The power and glory of vast enterprise
was running out for Spaniards, whose ears heard,
as the terrible voice of a sudden knelling bell,
an English name . . . El Drake! . . . El Drake! . . . and soon
the lazy communities of the Pacific Coast
would panic at sight of any distant sail,
start up, in fatalistic, tensed hypnosis,
at sight of any sail — El Drake! El Drake!

Francis Drake, who had been schooled as seaman
under his uncle, renowned old sea-dog Hawkins, 130
plying the slave-trade from the Guinea Coast
to Spanish America . . . laughing at dangers,
harassing and robbing the Spaniards, learning well

the meaning of cannon balls and cutlasses,
 of broadsides crushing the oaken walls of ships,
 of hand-to-hand encounters, blood in the scuppers. . . .
 Francis Drake, who bore in his face the scar
 inscribed by an Indian arrow; Francis Drake,
 ruthless sea-rover, interloper, staring
 over the Spanish Sea from Panama, 140
 Balboa of England, first Englishman conceiving
 urgent design to sail upon those waters;
 Magellan of England, rounding with his ships
 the bulk of Terra Firma; Francis Drake —
 who but himself? who but Francis Drake? —
 incomparable in daring fearful odds,
 incomparable in brilliant stratagem,
 of irresistible valour, wrecking, sacking
 the pride and hope of Spain in the New World,
 avenging insults to his Virgin Queen, 150
 and vindicating England's destiny.

"Abaxo, perro! . . . Go down, dog, go down!"
 cried Thomas Moon, striking with his cutlass
 in that first boarding, that complete surprising,
 of a deep-sea treasure ship at St. Iago.
 The prize was taken to sea, and emptied there
 of chests and pouches of Baldivia gold,
 and store of Chile wine. . . .

The *Pelican*
 renamed the *Golden Hind*. . . .

The *Golden Hind*
 gorging the riches of the Spanish King,
 chasing the *Cacafuego* to Callao, 160
 rifling her out at sea of fourteen chests
 of royals of eight, and bars of gold and silver.

Spaniards would lie in wait at Magellan Strait
for Drake's return, so the Captain-General sought
a freer passage with his robber cargo.
He gestured to find the fabled North-West Strait
of Anian around America,
and, balked in search by bitter cold, he turned
the *Golden Hind* from Nova Albion
across Pacific to the far Moluccas. . . .

170

The *Golden Hind*, gluttled with Spanish treasure,
the *Golden Hind* . . .

and that first company
of daring English in the Southern Ocean,
making the crossing to the Isles of Spice,
bartering silver there with Portuguese
for fresh provisions — and for fragrant spice,
borne on that rich, victorious return,
northward, then westward, of the Great South Land. . . .

First English ship to sail around the world,
the *Golden Hind*, hull down in Indian Ocean. . . .

180

Drake had imagination for his purpose.
A man of imagination, did he stand,
that purpose achieved, stand upon the deck
of the *Golden Hind*, as she made toward the Cape
Buena Esperanza, and gaze to East?

He watched the stars; most certainly he watched
the sky of brilliant stars. The Southern Cross
burned brightly over the ship. . . . Did Drake perceive
a sudden wonder in it? Did he catch,
between the shine of the Cross and the East Wind
blowing,

190

a personal stir of excitement that meant for a minute
strange glory, before he waived the Mystery? . . .

Did Francis Drake, early on deck one morning,
marvel at sunrise colours flowing after
the *Golden Hind* over the heaving waves,
and marvel at the Mystery of the Unknown?

What waters, what Land, to East?

Did Francis Drake
gasp at a sudden crazy fancy, that came
and vanished in an instant: "What if now
I ordered the helm about? Would the men obey 200
for more than a day and a night? . . . They'd know me
mad;
and perhaps there'd be a story for the playwrights."

Not yet were English minds on the Great South Land;
their fervours were all for treasure and corsair glory
and colourful deeds of circumnavigation.

[Cavendish; Hawkins]

Thomas Cavendish, gentleman of Tremley,
accosting the *Santa Anna* off the coast
of California, despoiling the huge
and cumbersome Manila Galleon
in the anchorage of San Lucas, hoisting forth 210
but a part of her glittering cargo to satiate
his ships, *Desire* and *Content*, and firing the rest. . . .

Richard Hawkins plundering Valparaiso,
following Drake and Cavendish round the World,
sailing to north and west of the Great South Land. . .

Hawkins and Cavendish were but shadows of what
Drake was. Their orthodox imagination
could hold no personal mystical Terra Australis.

[*The Tryal*]

When the Indian Ocean was a Dutch reserve,
with purposeful captains, strong in powder and steel, 220
trading to the Moluccas, come from the Cape
with favourable winds, beside the verge
of wild, O wild, New Holland, mysterious region . . .
how came the *Tryal* there, first English ship
recorded on that Coast?

So scant the record,
the *Tryal* comes swaying into wondering minds
suddenly, unannounced, at the end of a voyage,
the beginning and purpose only dimly guessed.

Behold the end of a voyage — an English ship,
the first recorded wreck on a Coast of Wrecks. . . . 230

The men were superstitious,
fearing they knew not what of evil spirits
in waters strange to them.

The bosun said, "I 'eard
fr'm one old seaman as knowed Cap'n Drake
thet there be dragons in the calmest waters
outside Atlantic. . . ."

Point Cloates was thought to be
an island. It hazed, south-east,
into the blue horizon as the ship — 240
the *Tryal* brought by Britons near New Holland

years before Dampier —
made northward for the spicy Isle of Java.

On May the twenty-fifth the sunset turned
the sky into a great red lily flower,
the sea into a green mauve-mottled leaf.

The waves were gentle then in crowding darkness.
the boisterous fo'c's'le settled down to silence.
The helmsman's task was easy.

Dreamed Thomas Bright, Chief Officer, on deck: 250
"This minds me of all the quiet nights of stars
I've known upon the sea made into one. . . ."

The helmsman held belief
in mermaids, and his eyes
were keen upon the sea.

The crash,
rip-and-long-shudder, as the *Tryal* struck,
woke Captain Brooke,
hurled and bruised him into wide-awakeness
against the reeling porthole, through which showed 260
the dim, untroubled, star-reflecting sea.

There was no land-loom, reef-flash, break
of wave; but jagged fangs
of monstrous underwater rocks held, splintering,
the good ship *Tryal*, whose hull was swamped
and fore-part fell away,
while, in the glinting dark,
shark-fins split the drowsy sea.

There were some who made a hard escape

in little open boats, while others stayed,
perched perilously on wreckage
out of sight of land, where no sail came
and shark-fins split the water.

270

The lucky made for Java. . . . It is not likely
those left behind lived, any of them, beyond
some horrible hours of torture and defeat,
with the waters beginning to growl and gnash white
teeth,
and the sharks impatient. . . .

It is not likely
that human ingenuity could contrive,
in that predicament, the waters leaping
for sure from unwonted calm, rafts for retreat —
retreat to what? . . . the sharks pursuing . . . to harsh
and inhospitable sandhills of New Holland?

280

*The beauty of New Holland fires my heart.
My heart is a flaunting sky of admiration,
loving the terrible beauty of the Coast;
and my heart has gathered forever to itself
the whispers and shouts of gales that raise the seas
and tatter the banked-up seaweed of the Coast,
and lift the spray, and shake the wheeling gull;
my heart holds knowledge not in the history books,
and the surge of the water, the surge of the sea-drenched
gale,
the surge of colours at dawn and end of day,
have told me the agony of those who died,
showed me the staring eyes of brave men, cowards,
and madmen beyond a care, brought me to thoughts
of men who yearned for their families and, in dying,
suffered the most for love's unhappiness.*

290

The portrait of Dampier. . . . Mark him closely now. . . .
 Here is the face of a man who asks no quarter 300
 from hardship, rather weighs his own endurance
 with courage to meet adversity. His eyes
 are not the flinching kind, and will not shut
 to any sight; they penetrate the best
 and worst before him, keen to know. His mouth,
 hardened in dangers, has not jettisoned
 kindness and smile and clean, resounding laugh,
 but sent such children of life to the room of the heart
 for warmth and safety during the night of storm,
 though out they'll burst, unchecked, on fair occasion. 310
 He has observed much, none of it forgotten;
 has toiled and striven with honest men and ruffians;
 has been the casual comrade of men who mixed
 gunpowder with brandy for stout-heartedness,
 of a rowdy, cut-throat rabble who could drain
 six quarts of punch at one ungulping draught. . . .
 Dampier, who learned, in a rugged wandering school,
 that goodness and evil mark the individual,
 despite all circumstance; found character
 to be a thing in itself that a man can take, 320
 in moments of life, if he will, to fashion strong. . . .
 He has come by ways which the respectable
 may shudder at, discovered among earth's rogues,
 amid the very environs of the lost,
 and in most desperate, rash contingencies,
 sure quality and ground for admiration. . . .
 Dampier, the logwood-cutter, the privateer,
 the hounder of Spanish caravels, the sacker
 and burner of villages, the ne'er-do-well,
 the vagabond about the Carribean 330
 and Isthmus of Panama, the voyager

to the very ends of the World; and ever, ever
sagacious, enquiring, curious, a careful
student of Nature, excellent observer
in lands across the Ocean, where Adventure
invited or jostled him, even on the arid
unprepossessing shores of harsh New Holland,
barren and sandy, hazed with heat, in which
moved flies and miserable-looking savages.

The portrait of Dampier. . . . See the rugged, firm
cast of that countenance, whose character
is adamantine curiosity.

340

Fate never could obliterate such interest
before the final scene and final utterance,
pronouncing Dampier dead. . . .

Today his eyes
look from the picture, obdurate as ever,
speaking their messages over centuries.

“There is an Opening out into the Sea. . . .”

Hydrographer, navigator, buccaneer,
seeing the World the simplest, hardest way;
disreputable hero in a grand succession
of seamen from the time of Vasco da Gama,
Magellan, Mendana, Torres, Quiros; alert
precursor of those heroic discoverers
of the scientific Eighteenth Century,
Bougainville and Cook. . . .

350

With buccaneers,
aboard the stolen *Cygnets*, Dampier turned
from plundering Spanish ships in the Philippines
to the Isles of Spice; then from the Timor Sea

to discover what New Holland would afford.

360

A privateer, with tough, cut-throat companions. . . .

A privateer, who kept a careful journal
of what befell, and of the things he saw.

“We steered north-east by east. So lies the land.
We came to a place where the land turns east and south.
We followed around twelve leagues, and saw a deep
bay, studded with many islands, finding here
good anchorage in twenty fathoms of water,
two miles from shore, where sand-banks face the sea. . . .

“That Land is made of dry and sandy soil,
and destitute of water, unless you dig. . . .

370

“Most of the trees we saw are dragon-trees:
their rind is black and rough; the leaves are dark;
gum oozes out from knots and cracks in the trunks.
A thin high grass grows plentifully under them.
They bear no fruit or berries. . . .

“We saw no beasts,
or any tracks of beast, except of one
that must have been the size of a mastiff dog. . . .

“The inhabitants of the Land are miserable.
The Hodmadods of Monatapa are
fine gentlemen for wealth compared to these,
who have no houses, clothes, fruit, poultry, sheep . . .

380

“lack two front teeth, and have great bottle-noses. . . .

“Their only food is fish, trapped in the weirs. . . .

"We filled our barrels with water at their wells;
besought them to carry these burdens to our boats. . . .

"We dressed them up in ragged clothes, believing
these presents would induce them to work for us;
but they are lazy, unutterably lazy.
Although we lifted the barrels to their backs, 390
they would not budge or stir.

"They grinned at us;
they stood and grinned while we carried the water
ourselves . . .

"and then they took the clothes from off their bodies,
laying them on the ground, as if they thought
such things for working only. They had no use
or liking for clothes. . . .

"So far as I could see,
they had no fancy for anything we had,
content with their savage, nondescript existence,
in their harsh, unhappy Country —

"a lazy race,
indolent, poverty-stricken, miserable, 400
inhabiting a Land whose solitude
is rent by cries of unfamiliar birds,
the wind forlorn in nameless vegetation,
and the surge or thunder of Ocean on the shore."

[*The Glory Missed*]

So Dampier left New Holland, with no good
opinion of the Country or its People,

observation not meeting more than the drab
and surface features.

Radiant Secret Life,
which cleverer men than he, in later years,
failed to discern — such William Dampier
could never know.

410

Short shore-held occupation
discovered none of the bush marsupials —
pouched mice and bandicoots alert beneath
the shining stars, none of the moles that burrowed
under the hard-baked ground.

A little stay
could not uncover to the stolid search
of Dampier's mind the glory of this Country.

He could not know its myriad years of myth,
its days of brilliant beauty and its nights
of starlight dreaming, spirits haunting the winds
and talking in the foliage of trees
around the leaping and the dying fires.

420

Dampier could not know that this hard Land,
niggard with water in the burning Dry,
was lavish to a fault at other times,
or that it was the Land of Byamee,
whose self or kindred spirits moved within
the souls of all the Totems and the Tribes;
he could not know how sacred breathed the earth,
forever glowing in Alcheringa;
he could not see — in parasitic sojourn
of buccaneering company — the splendour
of Lightning Brothers and of Rainbow Serpent,
or learn the tales of Bralgah and Ng'ruir Moch.

430

Dampier sailed away from the Great South Land,
was glad to leave its heat and flies behind him —
“vast tract of land”, yet island or continent
he could not say at first. . . .

It shaped in his mind;
not, not with the lavish colours of old Quiros’
Espiritu Santo, yet as a mighty Country. . . . 440

Leaving the pirate ship at Nicobar,
and bearing his journal, William Dampier crossed,
with some associates in a frail canoe —
through a terrible storm, when the sky was black with
clouds,
gashed lividly with forks and rivers of lightning,
and thunder and wind were loud, and the sea was white —
to the low land of Sumatra.

He survived
perils of storm and anxious fever; suffered
a beating from the Tonquinese; escaped
from the fort of Bencoolen by a stratagem
that fooled the Governor who kept him there. . . . 450

And Dampier returned at last to England,
bringing Prince Jeoly, a tattooed native,
poor side-show bondman, whom he quickly sold
for ready money.

Behold the published *Journal!*
Immediate fame for William Dampier,
the vagabond with an enquiring mind,
the buccaneer of serious observation,
far-traveller, accomplished hydrographer,
simple, vivid narrator, whose strength was Truth, 460

as far as a man could know it in his day,
concerning bearings and climates of distant lands,
strange birds and beasts, strange customs of strange
peoples.

So William Dampier, the buccaneer,
compelled respect. His company was courted.
He dined with Pepys and Evelyn; discussed
the published journal of the Dutchman, Tasman,
with Orford, First Lord of the Admiralty.

To William Dampier, buccaneer, much honour,
proposing an expedition around Cape Horn 470
to "the remoter part of the East India Islands
and the neighbouring Coast of Terra Australis" —

Thus
New Holland shaped in his mind; and Dampier
identified it, auraed in Mystery,
with long-sought Terra Australis Incognita,
the Great South Land, the Unknown Continent . . .
a Coastline rudely known, by Dutch acknowledged
as barren and dangerous, facing to the West;
a questioning sprawl on the chart, by Dutchmen shunned;
Land whose true character was still Unknown. . . . 480

[*The Voyage of the "Roebuck"*]

William Dampier, buccaneer — whose rating
aboard the *Cygnets* had been only that
of able seaman — given the King's command
to sail the *Roebuck*!

That old ship was rotten,
its crew unfit for heroic undertaking.

Delays, which promised a bleak mid-winter passage
around the Horn in a leaky ship, decided
its Captain to take the African route.

He sailed
not over the wide Pacific to the East
New Holland shore . . .

but, keeping the quarter deck, ⁴⁹⁰
with small arms ready, prepared for mutiny,
he brought his ship behind Dirck Hartog's Island,
and anchored in a harbour of the mainland —
a bay that swarmed with sharks, upon the verge
of regions all unknown. . . .

He named the bay
Shark Bay. . . .

This was a time of burgeoning,
when shrubs were covered with red and yellow flowers,
and white and blue, and sprinkled with coloured berries;
this was a time when all the air was sweet
with fragrance of plant and earth, and whistling birds ⁵⁰⁰
of green and gold and scarlet crossed the sky. . . .

The green of the sea in-shore creamed on the shingle. . . .

The sky was warm with a deep and vivid blue. . . .

Thus Dampier found New Holland, when he came
again upon its shores, and anchored in
Shark Bay. . . .

That way had Hartog gone. Along
that Coast he passed to Java. . . .

That very way,
not many years ago, had Vlamingh sailed,
and found Dirck Hartog's plate. . . .

Not far to sea,
the skeleton of the lost *Batavia* 510
crumbled among the reef-weed and the waves. . . .

But the thoughts of William Dampier were intent
upon the present. He noted Nature's beauty,
but found it tinsel. His keen eyes swept the Bay. . . .

He looked for water. The casks had fallen low.
He needed fresh provisions for his men,
but this Land promised little. The men ate shark,
and relished it; but water there was none
found on the shore.

Leaving their days of tramping 520
among the dunes and ragged coastal scrub
of wild Shark Bay, the sailors hauled up anchor,
and the *Roebuck* coasted northward; touched at islands
and at the mainland, on incessant search
for water, finding none at all, except,
meagre reward for so much searching and digging,
a runlet of brackish water, fit for boiling
of porridge, at Roebuck Bay.

Only the natives
knew where to find clean water in this Land.
They had their soaks and waterholes, all sacred, 530
all legended from immemorial time,
which no intruder from the Western World,
landing upon their tribal shores, could guess at.

The Aborigines, in hiding, saw
strange men — or were they spirits? . . . They knew not
what —

apparelled in shirts and trousers, boots and belts,
with broad sun-shading hats, bearing strange arms,
strange clubs and boomerangs, strange digging sticks. . . .

The Aborigines, though little seen,
observed these visitants from off the sea
wielding their very heavy blunt-nosed shovels — 540
attacking the native earth with shovels and picks,
great digging-sticks that bit into the soil;
and knew they searched for water. . . .

Tribesmen had
no love for bold intruders, who came without
due ceremony to wander on the Land
the Totem Gods had lived upon and fashioned;
and once, when Dampier and his men were digging
in earnest search for water, warriors came
and stood nearby upon a little hill,
waving their spears in menace, shouting out, 550
in words whose sound was strange, yet meaning clear,
to the party to begone. . . .

One native bore
streaks of white paint upon his nose and forehead,
and under his eyes, and on his breast and arms. . . .

The Captain and others walked towards these people
to seek a parley, whereon there followed a scuffle,
in which a spear missed William Dampier
by inches.

Captain William Dampier,
humane man,

then, in great regret, to save
the life of a sailor and his own, took aim 560
and shot a native.

The fight was quickly over,
and each side carried a wounded man away.

[*Influence of Dampier*]

The *Roebuck* left New Holland. Dampier had
few words of favour for that arid land,
that place of flies and wretched savages;
of poor refreshment; inhospitable
to sailors weary after voyaging. . . .
His rugged, colourful personality
impressed itself upon the public mind
of England and of France . . . though not for him 570
the marvellous visions of the Spaniards,
fanatic fervour, radiant illusion,
and not for him the dull materialism
of Dutchmen seeking one thing always — profit.

His passion was precise investigation;
his genius was curiosity.

He made small contributions to the charts;
his picture of the South was uninviting;
yet over his writings spread a swift romance;
his narratives of distant voyaging 580
bred wonder for the reader, lured the minds
of Europeans to the Antipodes. . . .

Defoe and Swift roved Southward in their fiction,
sent Crusoe and Gulliver to follow Dampier
and meet strange hazards in the wide Pacific.

There came the time of the South Sea Bubble, the time
of feverish speculation, mounting hopes
of romantic profit for the French and English.

Plans of these Nations now replaced the crude
ventures of buccaneers, as threats to the peace
and power of Spanish and Dutch in the bright New
World.

590

BOOK NINE

The French and the English

[Purry]

Jean Pierre Purry,
Dutchman whose realism soared beyond
the immediate instant of profit,
a servant of the Company, alarmed
at his masters' blindness,
butted with his notions of preparedness
at their stubborn self-sufficiency . . .

like a man, bound hand and foot, and gagged,
banging his head at a closed door
of a house bushrangers have fired
while those within are sleeping.

10

The Honourable Councillors muttered, "Botheration!
Here's one of our dogs going silly."

They treated his urgent memorials as nonsense.
Would they have made their fortunes had they turned
aside from the Isles of Spice to colonize
a barren land?

"What's this the fellow says?
The interior of New Holland may be rich,
like that of Mexico or of Peru!
A colony in Nuytsland! The man is crazy."

20

"Indeed, it seems so. What is the suggestion?"

"Put slaves from Java there, and make the shores
of Nuytsland into a depot for refreshment
of Company ships!"

“Refreshment for our ships
that never go there! Tasman gave the place
the widest berth he could. Since Francois Thyssen,
no one’s been near.”

“No, and never shall
sane men go near that barren place again.
Thyssen was shrewd; he said the place was useless.”

“But Purry says that, if we leave it empty,
the French or English are bound to come along
to colonize New Holland. They are welcome.” 30

“Thrice welcome! but I fear they’re not so foolish.
Such ventures there would take them off our hands,
for they are very troublesome. For us
to shred our vital attention to our trade
would weaken the Company’s strength in difficult times.
We’ve got to concentrate on what we have,
for that’s worth keeping, not go chasing rainbows — 40
such rainbows too! Just like New Holland sunrise,
all promise of ruby and gold, but what’s beneath
is shifting dunes, and flies, and brittle sticks,
and naked savages who have no homes.”

“New Holland is like its sunrise. That is good.
All rainbow-promises, for what comes after
is the long and arid day — a desert of day.”

“A brittle woman, whose promise is frustration.”

“This Purry is a nuisance, wasting our time. 50
This is his logic: we must settle the place
to defend the Indies! Blest if I can see it.

Perhaps he has seen the place, or read about it
from the pen of someone crazier than he,
so that its heat and colour have turned his brain.
The Englishman, Dampier, painted a pretty picture
of Shark Bay in the Spring, but followed it up
with facts the whole world knows — the lack of water,
the lack of anything, if it comes to that."

[*Growth of English and French Power*]

The interest in Terra Australis Incognita 60
increased in England and France, became a flame
that burned the house of the Dutch, till the Honourables
regretted, amid the ruins they had saved,
what they had lost and more they failed to gain.

Jean Pierre Purry died, and the notions he had
flew out of his skull and blew about the World,
and the French and English got them. The English held
them.

[*Roggeveen*]

The Dutch East India Company was losing
capacity for expansion, yet resented
the Dutch West India Company's enterprise. 70

Jacob Roggeveen rounded the Horn, beyond
the latitude of sixty, beating against
the West Wind's fury, in regions of hail and snow,
escaping giant icebergs in the fog
that clung to the seas.

He said: "Such masses
of ice could not be formed in open sea,
or fashioned by the common force of Cold.
The powerful currents coming from the South
derive from torrents loosed in soaring uplands
of Terra Australis, spread about the pole."

80

He searched for Davis Land, but found, instead —
on Easter Day, in seventeen-twenty-two —
a little fertile isle of friendly people,
who worshipped idols of basaltic stone
that faced the sea. He named it Easter Island.

He followed then a most uncertain course,
always seeking the Southern Continent;
but found no splendid shoreline, towering high
above the sea and stretching league on league,
the mighty Land of Quiros, long-divined.

90

He came at last to the shining Tuamotus,
where one of his ships, the *African Galley*, foundered.

The other ships escaped through the Labyrinth . . .

discovered the lovely Islands of Samoa. . . .

The expedition reached Batavia,
where the older-established, rival Company,
with dog-in-manger attitude, made seizure
of the *Tienhoven* and *Eagle*, hustled their complements
and brave Commander back to the Netherlands.

Merchants of Holland, envious of each other,
yourselves are foes, while others covet your house.

100

Commissioned by the French East India Company
to seek the Land of Southern India
de Gonneville discovered, Lozier Bouvet,
having arrived in the chilly South Atlantic,
walked in excitement all about his ship
and squinted through the fog, the days of fog,
at the landfall which he made; stood off to sea,
with fog as thick he barely saw the mast;
stood in again, with care, to the loom of coast, 110
when the thick grey-whiteness of cloud-heavy air
thinned just enough for him to view the vague
coast wavering like a deceptive phantom . . .

Such
it was — for Bouvet saw a Continent
where, day by day in thickly misted seascape,
he strained his eyes for glimpses of the island,
he took to be a cape of Terra Australis.

Espiritu Santo, Southern India,
the Land of Quiros, the Country of Le Maire,
New Holland — all these mighty territories, 120
thought of by voyagers as joined in one
and sweeping up from the Pole, Bouvet conceived
to be the sponsors of the fog-bound cape
which was not cape but island.

There, at sea,
his vessel wallowing in the waves and fog,
to west of Cape Buena Esperanza,
he stood off and on the Cape of the Circumcision,
as he chose to name the island he first saw
through fog on a New Year's morning . . .

Bouvet Island . . .

[*The Vision of Lozier Bouvet*]

and in his mind, enthralled with fantasy, 130
he voyaged through the fog along the Coast
of the Great South Land, the Continent of all
the great Geographers' dreams, the Continent
of the Sieur de Gonneville, Quiros, Le Maire, the Land
which famous Discoverers had reported.

Bouvet
saw himself as the final Discoverer,
the last and greatest in a grand succession. . . .

Gazing hard at his faint and drab little island,
he smelt in his nostrils fragrant airs of spice;
felt chilblained fingers soothed in the thought of silk; 140
imagined he saw the towering inland cities
of Terra Australis Incognita, glinting
with the lights of jewels and plate of beaten gold . . .

and all his sense was drunken with his mood. . . .

He heard his heart thump, thump in his breast with
pride. . . .

A vision of Lozier Bouvet . . .

receiving homage,
in the brilliant capitals of Terra Australis,
much lauded and praised in the Courts there, much
admired . . .

conducted, one of considerable consequence,
amid the press and throng of splendid markets, 150
where monkeys and parrots chattered on the stalls
of rare commodities . . .

borne everywhere
upon a beautiful milk-white elephant.
Bedraped in gorgeous finery it was,
that milk-white elephant which bore him on
through press of marvelling crowds in Terra Australis,
most honoured guest of the Lords in that Land of
Dream. . . .

Lozier Bouvet saw himself at ease
with the Lords and Ladies and Royalty of France,
conceded special dignity and thanks. . . . 160

Deep, deep in the fog, off-shore, by Bouvet Island,
Lozier Bouvet regretted the need for return
to France for better provision and equipment
to proceed on the Master Voyage of All Time.

He sailed to north, and left the actual fog,
but carried impossible visions in his head.

"I shall sail again to the Cape of the Circumcision,
and thence, along the one tremendous Coast,
to the region of New Holland, and on and on,
still skirting the One Great Coast, to Espiritu Santo, 170
and thence, still on and on, to uncover the whole
vast shape of Terra Australis Incognita."

Regretting the need for return, but finding himself
all unprepared for such a lengthy voyage. . . .

Vainly hoping to put to sea again.

[*Anson*]

Captain George Anson, an officer of England
in the War of Jenkins' Ear against the Spaniards,
sailed through the Straits of Le Maire and around the
Horn.

The ships were poorly manned, poorly provisioned.
Press-gangs had gathered the crews from merchant
ships

180

and grog-shops, and Anson took deliveries
from jails and hospitals — rough criminals,
crippled out-patients, some of them demented.

The spars of the ships were rotten, the rigging defective.

Those ships rolled gunwale-to at the stormy Horn;
the snow and sleet, in unremitting blasts,
cased the rigging; the sails were frozen brittle.

The *Severn* and *Pearl* were blown to the Atlantic;
the *Wager* was wrecked upon the shore of Chile,
the gallant little *Anna Pink* condemned, 190
the *Tryal* sent back to the Island of Juan Fernandez. . . .

Scurvey and Death walked *Gloucester* and *Centurion*. . . .

Heroic Anson, with a heart like Drake's,
taking the track of Drake in the Pacific . . .

pursuing the *Monte Carmelo*, merchant ship,
and taking enormous booty, in manner of Drake . . .

burning the foundering *Gloucester* on the Ocean . . .

English courage persisting across the World,
the battered *Centurion* passing like a ghost
to the Philippines . . .

grappling a Galleon, 200
the *Covadonga*, winning a bloody fight
for a fortune of plate and coin and virgin silver. . . .

The battle-torn, storm-worn *Centurion*,
voyaging like a ghost through the seas of the Dutch
and around the Cape, and through the Atlantic, home
to England. . . .

[*John Campbell*]

There John Campbell, patriot
and moralist, conceived a Vision of Commerce.

All enterprises through Pacific Ocean
by navigators of the different Nations,
including English, were fuel in his mind, 210
when a notion, escaped from the skull of Purry, deceased,
lodged there as a spark to set it in a blaze
with a message for merchants of England.

“Colonize
New Holland! happiest Land in all the World.
Do not believe the climate is too hot.
Great heat attends great riches. Colonize
New Holland, Land whose whereabouts we know;
and thence proceed to trade for all the wealth
of Terra Australis Incognita, which sprawls

from the Pole, and west of South America, 220
including all reported promontories
of Quiros, Le Maire and Roggeveen and Tasman.
Merchants of Britain, in your Companies,
lay claim to the Trade of the World, invade the South,
build there your Settlements — in Madagascar,
New Holland, Juan Fernandez; find your trade,
in the beckoning New World, for precious stones
and silk and spice. Behold, New Guinea waits;
New Britain, Van Diemen's Land and Terra Australis
await your ships and will supply your trade." 230

[*Maupertius*]

Maupertius, mathematician — Sarmiento
of France to French Mendana, Charles de Brosses,
both questers in theory over the wide South Sea,
accepting, as positive fact, hypotheses
of extravagant colours concerning Terra Australis —
Maupertius did not doubt reports of travellers
that, in the marvellous South, lived men with tails.

His mind was feverish with enthusiasm
at the tantalizing prospect for discussion
by scholars with men with tails. . . .

The cause of Knowledge 240
was close to his questing heart, and so he urged
twin interests of Science and Commerce in Discovery.

[*De Brosses*]

De Brosses was fired to pen a narrative

of South Sea voyaging, exhorting France
to do herself and all Mankind a service
by bringing the Unknown Land to cognizance:

“Better to find new lands than fight in old.
The Nations of Europe quarrel with each other,
storming and battering forts, expending, amid
the horrors of bloodshed, fortunes which might spell 250
eternal glory to men through consecration
to noble discovery.

“Our own de Gonneville,
illustrious son of France, reported once
a voyage to the Great South Land —

“before
Magellan passed the Straits. . . .

“Undoubtedly,
our Country is bound by duty. We must honour
the pioneering of our brave de Gonneville,
and vindicate our rights. Our claim outweighs
the claims of other Nations to assume
command of that great Southern Continent . . . 260
found and lost, and now to be found again.

“Its centre is the Pole. Its mighty bounds
embrace the many capes and promontories
which Quiros, Le Maire and Roggeveen reported
from months of voyaging on the Pacific.

“The Southern Land is of gigantic size.
It must be so. Earth’s equilibrium
demands that Southern mass should counterbalance
the weight of masses situated North.

“And, in the territories of Terra Australis,
what profit and what knowledge wait for us!
what trade in treasure, medicine and spice!
what people, customs and religions there —
all strange to us, intriguing for our scholars!

270

“Who knows but there exist in Terra Australis
interior cities of exotic culture,
which even France may learn from?

“Three divisions
comprise the South Land: Magellanica
and Polynesia — cold for settlement,
for they lie in the highest latitudes
of Atlantic and Pacific to the South —
and Australasia, which, of all, is best,
a region of isles and undiscovered straits
associated with the Continent.

280

“In Australasia let our Nation plant
her colonies. The island of New Britain
is praised by Roggeveen and Dampier,
and is more fertile than New Holland shores.
There should we plant our colonies and send
our beggars, our orphans and our criminals
to work their own redemption and our gain.”

290

[*English and French Rivalry*]

In India and North America,
English and French were at each others' throats,
fighting for Trade in distant, settled lands . . .

expending, in bloodshed, fortunes which could spell,
in new discovery, eternal glory. . . .

England and France, the dominant powers of Trade,
gripping each others' throats in mortal conflict. . . .

England staggering on to victory. . . .

England and France at peace again, becoming 300
rivals in distant navigation, rivals
for coveted prestige of high endeavour,
rivals for power of Trade to be discovered.

The science of Navigation making strides,
with new inventions and new methods, based
on Mathematics and Astronomy. . . .

Stronger and faster ships now taking the Ocean,
with captains whose statements of geography
acquired the accuracy of Dampier.

[Byron]

John Byron, who had sailed with Captain Anson 310
and lost the *Wager* on the coast of Chile,
was no great navigator, but contrived
a later circumnavigation, marked
by some events of interest.

He ignored
instructions to seek a passage from Pacific
to Hudson Bay . . .

sailed straight to Masafuero

with his two ships, the *Dolphin* and the *Tamar* . . .
then struck north-west, with scurvy on the ships . . .

naming the Isles of Disappointment, where
the groves of cocoanut upon the shore
mocked at his crews who found no anchorage . . .

320

sailing and sailing over the green Pacific . . .

discovering, on an isle, a rudder-head —
perhaps of the *African Galley*, for Roggeveen
had been that way . . .

sailing and sailing on . . .

sailing to Java, and home around the Cape
to the British Isles, where dwelt John Callander.

[Callander]

John Callander, John Callander could read
a French book in the original; could render
as much as suited him for free translation
into the English tongue

330

Scotch plagiarist! . . .
picking the brains of de Broses, as an eaglehawk
will scoop in the skull of a lamb. John Callander
wrote feverishly, the swift beak of his quill
appropriating for the British people
ideas and exhortations gentle de Broses
had fashioned for his French compatriots. . . .

“Find out new lands where Trade-potential is,
and colonize them for our Country’s honour,
and wealth of all our Commerce.

“Dampier found

340

New Britain. Let the English settle there —
in Terra Australis Incognita too.”

Terra Australis Incognita, the English
have you in mind! Their thoughts are on you now.
Your phantom coastline bulks throughout a quarter
of all the globe; your spicy vales; your mountains,
with quilts and peerless tapestries of snow;
your fabulous and scintillating cities . . .
Terra Australis Incognita, Land
of sage geographers' dreams, the Great South Land, 350
the End of Voyaging, smile now your brightest
in the glamorous evening of your magic day. . . .

[Dalrymple]

Of three East India Companies, the English
employed the best hydrographer. The skill
of Alexander Dalrymple was outstanding . . .

but he returned to England with his knowledge,
and there built larger and stronger his boyhood vision,
with unabated hero-love for Quiros
and all the hardy voyagers whose ships
had borne them into the Mystery of the Pacific. 360

He dreamed of Terra Australis Incognita,
would gaze at a South Sea chart for hours at a time,
conjuring contours eastward of New Holland.

Alexander Dalrymple nourished a phantom,
devoted his man's mind, knowledge and experience
to service of his vivid boyhood dream.
He would have liked to voyage far himself,

in search of Terra Australis Incognita,
but stayed in England, fervently at work
tricking out and bolstering up his vision
with sturdy wit and rare imagination. . . .
Dalrymple, stay-at-home, on whom had fallen
the mantles of Mendana and of Quiros,
the mantles of Le Maire and Roggeveen. . . .
Dalrymple who devoted all his being
to passionate pursuit of an illusion,
his blood and brain imbued with tireless zeal. . . .

370

[*The Vision of Alexander Dalrymple*]

Ah, Terra Australis Incognita! bright
and burning vision in the minds of scholars
and captains long ago, before Dalrymple
yielded his mind and purpose to your beauty. . . .
Your towers and palaces and spicy glades,
your colours and wondrous other-worldly graces
must blossom in hearts of dreamers till the end
of poet-voyaging on seas of Time. . . .
O inexpressible and rapturous Land!
An earthly El Dorado, ghostly fine,
built of all hopes and aspirations, blest
with balm of realization of all dreams,
symbol for striving even unto death!

380

390

Dalrymple saw you — clear, ineffable,
fair Land of the Southern Waters, long-divined.
His writings exalted the phantom Continent,
Terra Australis Incognita, which stretched
from east of Juan Fernandez south to New Zealand,
and north to Espiritu Santo, occupying
a larger area than settled Asia

from Turkey to extremity of China.
He reared his vision, radiant in homage
to that of Quiros, brilliant in argument
from popular, attractive premises —
a vision persuasive for contemporaries,
constructed from extravagant tradition,
endorsed with marvel of metaphysical skill.

“It is not reasonable that we should cherish
our settlements in North America —
those thorns of trouble — while the Great South Land,
with all its millions of population, waits
to swell the British sovereignty, provide
employment for our industries and ships.” 410

He would have liked to venture forth himself
to find the Terra Australis Incognita,
which stretched so surely, precisely, in his mind;
and he was confident that men would know it
while yet he lived to glory in the knowing,
the long-sought found within a matter of years. . . .

But a little decade saw all his dreams undone. . . .

*Terra Australis, phantasmal Continent,
vanished, shredded from serious pursuit . . .*

*a bubble from a boy's clay pipe, with lights 420
of sunrise in it, lovely spectacle,
rich with the real and flashing colours of fancy,
borne high on tides of sparkling sunny air
to stab itself to nought on a twig of fact . . .*

*but leaving a sad and exquisite regret . . .
a vision of worship in ruins . . . emptiness gaping. . . .*

Alexander Dalrymple, much aggrieved
at Cook's discovery of Torres Strait,
which he surmised and wished to reveal himself. . . .

Alexander Dalrymple, disillusioned
when Cook destroyed the Terra Australis Myth,
resented Cook. Resentment was his weakness.

430

Of Alexander Dalrymple be it said
he was no dunce, if he was wrong.

He deduced
existence of Torres Strait before Cook knew it.

[*Character of Dalrymple*]

And more of Dalrymple. . . .

When a man builds
as one inspired, with energy, with devotion
to a grand conception, something beyond himself,
with all disturbing love, his character
is admirable in the striving. He is distinct
from decent, quiet, ordinary folk who watch him
or turn to their affairs, with a distinction
of strength and merit; he is superior
to petulant hecklers and I-told-you-sos.
He is the creative soul who builds his best,
and not ignobly, even when in error,
essayng vindication of ideals.
Either he is a genius Time will prove,
or prophet of a Cause which, doomed to failure,
is yet by him uplifted, made sublime.

440

450

Dalrymple's mind was faithful to a Dream

of such impossible ideals as draw
the hearts of men to hopeless adoration;
and Alexander Dalrymple shall have honour
for his ideals that over-reached the bounds
of fact, and yet in this were true: they soared
beyond the commonplace and found awhile,
secure within the haven of the heart,
spiritual glow of beauty, that cannot be
false as distorted motives of men are false.
Lies and chicanery, deceit and murder,
selfish pursuits of nations and of men
are facts of hate and misery . . . but dreams
of happiness and splendour which, if true,
could but redound with benefit for many,
such, even in dereliction, must remain
sources of wonder for earnest contemplation. . . .

460

For vicious greed, for mundane selfishness,
for good of all, for service to their fellows,
men follow the self-same lures. The difference is
within the heart and working of the brain.

470

The grandest definition of ideals
is in the personalities who raise them;
and Alexander Dalrymple is a prince
in company of zealous men who sought
to give reality the hues of dream,
aiming to find Philosopher's Stone, Elixir
of Life, and then a fabulous Continent.

[Wallis and Carteret]

Before the colourful bubble was broken, the Dream
disintegrated in the blaze of fact

480

Samuel Wallis and Philip Carteret
voyaged to seek the Southern Continent.

A hazardous passage through Magellan Strait
brought them to the Pacific in clouds of fog,
which parted their ships.

The *Dolphin* and the *Swallow*
sailed separate courses, around the World and home,
neither with landfall on the Great South Land.

Both bore the horror of scurvy; both dropped anchor,
in thankfulness, at islands of refreshment.

Wallis's ship, the *Dolphin*, was sturdy. In her, 490
he had sailed the World with Byron, and now made
first European visit to Tahiti
and love of Queen Oberea. . . .

But the *Swallow*
was rotten in her timbers. Carteret's voyage
was one of courage, resolution, skill,
of great achievement, gracing the Ocean-annals . . .
of little fruit, yet vast in human spirit. . . .

Sailing through Ocean over the marked location
of Davis Land, concluding that two islands —
St. Ambrose and St. Felix — were all there was 500
to substantiate the dream of that Continent . . .

naming Pitcairn Island . . .

long green billows,
that rolled from the South to the fringe of the Tuamotus,
convincing Carteret of open Ocean
with no South Land in a month of voyaging . . .

careening at New Britain, in English Cove . . .

repairing the *Swallow* again at Batavia . . .

arriving in England when Cook was in the Pacific,
and Bougainville had anchored at St. Malo.

[*Bougainville*]

Lawyer, mathematician, philosopher; 510
a servant in his Country's Embassy
in London across the Channel; aide-de-camp
to Montcalm; soldier in Canada, of valour
acknowledged with decoration. . . .

Chevalier

Louis Antoine de Bougainville, warm-hearted
and enterprising patriot of France,
after the war was over, France defeated,
eager to brighten her honour, turned naval man.

The frigate *Boudeuse* and smaller provision-ship,
Etoile, came through Magellan Strait and steered 520
for Davis Land, elusive Continent,
born of imagination . . . nowhere found. . . .

Like Carteret, who went that way before him,
Bougainville perceived that little islands,
St. Ambrose and St. Felix, were all there was
to substantiate the claim of a Continent.

West, west the course lay then, between the Equator
and Tropic of Capricorn . . .

past lovely islands,
les quatre Facardins, green with swaying palms

and bright with hovering birds . . .

past sandy islands,
fraught with peril for careless voyagers,
the Dangerous Archipelago, requiring
a detour to the south . . .

530

on through the group
of Tuamotus, and along the fringe
of the gay and colourful Society Islands . . .
Bougainville protesting: "Geographers
are pleased to make a mighty Continent
stretch seventy leagues across the water here.
If such there were, we could not fail to find it.
While many islands lead us to the thought
of a continental land-mass near at hand,
we ought not leap ahead to our conclusions.
The Science of Geography should deal
in fact, not theory. Scholars, shut in studies,
should not succumb to systems of their fancy;
in doing so, they breed grave errors that must
react to the expense of navigators. . . ."

540

A stay at Tahiti . . . trading for provisions
with friendly island people. . . .

Bougainville,
dismayed at brutal murder of islanders
by men from off the ships, whose identity
could not be ascertained,
put four of his soldiers in irons, under suspicion,
in presence of Chief Ereti; giving out
presents of clothes and tools among the natives
to show regret and keep their confidence.

550

With weather bad, some anchors lost off-shore,
and fear of further trouble on the island,
Bougainville made all ready for the sea,
and sailed away from fair Tahitian shores.

560

West, past the Bowman Islands, past Samoa . . .
west, past the lovely Samoan Islands, west
across the little known and heaving Ocean,
Bougainville sailed with those two ships of France,
not changing his course north-west, but risking rather
the possibility of lee-shore peril
upon the uncharted East Coast of New Holland. . . .

Water was short, and scurvy stalked the ships. . . .

Winds came from the west, with driving rain and
storm. . . .

Then calm delayed the ships. . . .

Now tropic nights
were tense with watchfulness for reefs or shoals.

570

The ships continued westward, and they came
to Melanesian islands, the natives black;
and here they found refreshment.

Bougainville
taking possession of the group for France —
the Pentecostal Isles — the ships sailed on;
the ships sailed on, with course south-westerly,
to make investigation of more land . . .

long coasts that reached as far as eye could see,
with massive mountain chains, whose summits lifted
above grey skirts of cloud. . . .

580

The sky was dull,
and squalls of rain rode over land and sea.

This was the Land of Quiros, Espiritu Santo.

The *Boudeuse* and *Etoile* could find no place
of anchorage; yet Bougainville perceived
how easily bold Quiros might mistake
this long, majestic coastline, at first sight,
to be the Continent of which he dreamed. . . .

And here were only islands. . . .

Bougainville
considered his next move. What land to west? 590
For certain, there New Holland lay, but whether
one coast or a group of islands, who could say?
Geographers surmised, and differed, much.
To solve the problem now was Bougainville's
intention, as his ships had come so far;
so he continued, with the course to west. . . .

Seeking New Holland, Bougainville moved West,
in fifteen degrees of latitude . . .

retarded
in progress by the *Etoile*, but pressing sail
as much as possible in daylight hours; 600
running at night beneath reefed topsails.

The wind
was favourable. . . .

They came to sandy islands,
upon the shores of which white breakers dashed,

and over which there thronged a host of birds.
The Shoal of Diana. . . .

On they sailed. . . .

Next day,
strange fruits and seaweed showed upon the waves;
and, on the next, in afternoon, ahead,
a sand-bank loomed. . . .

So Bougainville changed course,
and stood to north. . . .

Later, he changed again
to westward, but the *Boudeuse* and *Etoile* 610
soon came in sight of frothing fields of foam,
that stretched, where Ocean crashed on rock and shoal,
as far as view could reach to north and south,
what seemed an endless danger strung across
the western course . . .

and Bougainville declared:
"This last discovery was the Voice of God.
We were obedient to it, set our course
north-east-by-north . . ."

Thus, thus did Bougainville,
great navigator, celebrated Frenchman,
turn back from the Barrier Reef, which blocked his
way 620
to the Coast of a Continent — not Terra Australis
of old conquistadore tradition, yet
Terra Australis, the Great South Land indeed.

The Barrier Reef stood guard upon its own.

BOOK TEN

Captain Cook

[*The Great Unknown*]

North of New Guinea lay well-charted waters,
washing the ports of China and Japan;
but stretching southward was the Great Unknown,
which, in triumphant mockery, had withstood
two hundred and fifty years of Europe's challenge.

The Great Unknown! What Seas? What Continent?
What Straits? What Islands . . . Peoples . . . Politics?

Uncharted, unexploited . . . the Great Unknown . . .
fringed by the fragile threads of navigation
spun into water by heroic captains, 10
Magellan to Bougainville in the Pacific,
Tasman upon the Southern Ocean, pressing
east to Van Diemen's Land and then New Zealand.

The Great Unknown . . . the Region of Conjecture,
of soaring hopes and sad uncertainties . . .
bounded with firmness only as the Coast
of harsh New Holland sprawled, tremendous arc,
in leisurely manner west from Drooge Bocht,
in tropic seas, then southward, eastward, till
knowledge would waver where drab Nuytsland took 20
icy Antarctic winds and thunderous rollers
upon its barren sands and naked rocks.

The Great Unknown. . . Ah, boon to makers of maps,
whose curious skill proposed how Terra Australis
filled half Pacific Ocean! . . . cited, wealthy,

a land of coveted commodities,
spices and tapestries and precious stones.

The desperate, earnest, lustful minds of men
groped through the Great Unknown to limn their dreams
of Beauty and of greed in Terra Australis 30
to eastward of New Holland, dreary shore,
or richly joined to this, its poor excrescence.

The Great Unknown, throughout the northern Nations,
gave rise to extravagant fancies, preposterous hopes,
and sober determination to press enquiry.

The rivalry of France and England — carried
beyond the clash of war, the flames and smoke
of resonant shot of Ticonderoga, Quebec,
Wandiwash, Pondicherry — found expression 40
in search for the Southern Continent: a jealous
and urgent quest, promoted under pretexts
thinly disguising the purpose, covering up
official aims with scientific zest,
lauding ideals through which advantage showed.

Though giddy dreams, inordinate pretence,
disintegrate and fade in blaze of Truth,
the Great Unknown held close its richest prize —
no Great South Land of men's erratic fancy,
but the Great South Land indeed — behind the bulwarks
of arid sand, and cruel rock, and long, 50
strong, formidable barrier of its coral reefs.

The French came near; but Bougainville turned back
at the very threshold of discovery.

The terrible boom of Ocean on the Reef
was to his ears an interdict of God.

Jim Cook, the farmer's boy of Airyholm,
although morose, reserved, showed special promise.

That old Miss Walker, for whom he ran some errands,
taught him to read.

This was a start.

Miss Walker,
did you lean over "the golden bar of Heaven", 60
in later years, to watch a ship on the Ocean —
look proudly down at the silent, thin-lipped man
in the cabin of the *Endeavour*, setting out
his reckonings in the log-book?

Mr Scottowe,
you paid for Jim to go to the Village School.
Were you not pleased to note the lad's advance?

The boy who left the farm at Airyholm,
who left the town of Staithes to come to Whitby,
who left the shores of England, before the mast,
upon the coal-ships, sailing again and again 70
on the cold North Sea . . .

the boy became a man,
leaving his native land with the Royal Navy . . .

in very little time, the master's mate;
gaining experience, destined for promotion. . . .

James Cook, responsible servant of the King!
reader of *Voyages*, determined student,

astronomer, man of purpose, conscientious,
thorough in all his work, implacable
in seeing duty done, a lover of ships,
to whom the sea was an open book to be read . . . 80

surveying the St. Lawrence in time of war;
surveying Miquelon and St. Pierre
when war was over; surveying Newfoundland;
acquiring reputation for diligence
and superlative talent, under the shrewd regard
of Admiral Lord Coleville; winning a name
as navigator, surveyor, mathematician . . .
a paper read to the Royal Society. . . .

James Cook, humane, considerate master of men,
receiving the King's commission to take the *Endeavour*,⁹⁰
a cat-built bark, to far away Tahiti
for observation of the Sun's Eclipse —

on Government enterprise, in furtherance
of interests of the Royal Society;
on Government enterprise to far Tahiti
for scientific observation . . .

bearing
sealed orders to be opened later on,
touching ideals through which advantage showed.

[*Tahiti*]

In Matavai Bay the ship, *Endeavour*, anchored.

Rejoicing natives came in their canoes,
came from the coral beach beneath the palms 100

Learning from Tupia of many islands
in those warm seas, of many lovely islands —

but nothing of the Southern Continent.

The Captain had snapped the seal of the Secret Orders.

[*New Zealand*]

Tupia destined for a long, last voyage . . .

following Secret Orders, Cook sailed south
the distance they prescribed . . . discovering
no Southern Continent, no Davis Land;
then, following Secret Orders, turned to west
towards the eastern coastline of New Zealand,
the Staten Land of Abel Janzsoon Tasman,
whose flitting visit wrought so little knowledge.

130

The Maoris thought the *Endeavour* a large sea-bird,
with beautiful wings of white.

The boat that left her side appeared to them
an unfledged young one, bearing household demons
that killed with thunderbolts
and lightnings from a distance.

140

Cook made his skilful charts of the rugged coasts
of those green, lovely islands of New Zealand,
and claimed them for the King of England.

Then,
ending a six months' sojourn by those coasts,
he summoned his officers to make decision
what way to voyage from the Long White Cloud.

A gathering fraught with fate!

Three routes lay open:
directly around the Horn . . .

or Africa . . .

or by the Unknown Shore of East New Holland. 150

The Unknown flung its challenge to the Captain;
its Mystery gripped his heart. For certain, here
was something to be found, while other ways
were known, would bring forth nothing. . . .

Now a shore
was waiting to be charted.

This was no case
for the toss of a coin. The Unknown flung its gauge
for taking up or leaving.

Aboard the *Endeavour*
was no fanatical conquistadore
with a fearful, mutinous crew, and officers
whose thoughts bred murderous faction. The Captain
heeded 160
division in argument, and put his views.

The stores were ample for a further venture,
and health aboard was good. The Unknown flung
its gauge upon the deck of the *Endeavour*.
Advance? Retreat?

There was no hasty choice,
and no great show about decision reached.

Cook and his officers took up the challenge.

[*The East Coast*]

Breezes came lightly, and the *Endeavour* sailed lightly. . . .

It was a casual approach,
Banks going often in a boat to fish
and shoot at birds.

170

Cook aimed to sight the Vandemonian Coast,
discover whether or not there was a Strait
between this and New Holland . . .

but the winds
freshened, became a gale, which put an end
to the picnics of Joseph Banks, and blew the ship
northward of Tasman's Land, and left the Strait
a matter for question still.

Cook shortened sail,
plied north and south in the night-time to avoid
crashing the ship in the dark, for land was near.

180

He knew that land was near when he observed
Port Egmont hens . . .

a lone pintado bird. . . .

He knew that land was near. He keyed his senses.

One night, he thought, "At dawn." With uncanny
judgment,
he had the ship lie to . . .

and, in the morning,
Lieutenant Hicks cried, "Land!"

Excited, Cook
now crowded sail, and made for the sloping Coast
of scrubby hills that, with their tracts of sand,
smiled, green and gold, as the sun leapt up behind.

The East Coast of New Holland! Green and gold! . 190
the sunlight raged on crests where sand and tree
cascaded colour to the ocean edge
and lit green water with the blaze of gold!

The brightening scrub spat sparks of fiery birds.

The ship moved close to the shore. The seagulls hovered
and swooped about her, mast-tips to the waves;
perched on the cross-trees, rigging, bulwarks; screeched;
squabbled for breakfast scraps from the galley window.

The "Endeavour" making her landfall on that Coast,
the eyes of every man aboard her roving . 200
as far as vision could reach on the dawnlit hills
that famous day. . . .

The ship sailed nor'-nor'-east,
continued sailing, for a heavy surf
and winds prevented landing.

Puffs and wisps
of smoke arose from fires along the Coast,

ascending, white on azure . . .

evanescent . . .

smoke rising up to melt in hard blue day. . . .

*See how the thin smokes spear into the sky,
leaving the scrub with earth's primaeval lights
reflected in them . . .*

becoming a fading whiteness 210
within an endless blue . . .

attenuated
smoke-signals of the Land's Own People . . .

fading . . .

faint symbols of the Unknown's solitude.

The "Endeavour" sailing, sailing beside New Holland. . . .

[*Smoke Signals*]

Word flew up the Coast, by smoke-signal
and runners with message-sticks,
of a great white bird that spread its wings on the sea,
breasting the waves before it in surges of spray,
leaving a wake to be seen from the highest hills . . .

a great white bird, wings spread, with slow, long
sweep . . . 220

or was it a big canoc, big as a standing tree,

a cloud tied to it with sinews or woven hair
of a giant beast?

. . . canoe that moved to the north
as the strong winds blew the cloud.

The Land's Own People watched.

[The Landing Challenged]

"Go on, Isaac; you go first,"
said the Captain
—and the lad, with a hand on the side of the boat,
vaulted to land.

230

The natives had retreated up the sand-hill.

But the older man and the youth came back again
from huts among the bushes —

two naked savages, with spears, disputing the landing
of two boat-loads of well-armed Englishmen;
and the odds
were two to thirty or forty.

Thirty or forty Englishmen stood firmly
on the East New Holland Shore, on the white beach;
and the sun burned down from a sky of infinite
blue. . . .

240

The natives hurled their spears,
which did no harm.
It was no fight;
charges of small-shot sent them scurrying.

Cook admired the native courage, made
observations on the native life:

“They balance their lances on pieces of wood
of fore-arm length,
from which they gather force in throwing them. . . .

“Their canoes are the poorest that I ever saw; 250
their houses are primitive and not much used,
the people being content to lie on grass,
with simple breaks of bark against the wind. . . .

“Clothing and houses they easily do without,
in their warm and clement weather. . . .

“They live a simple life, all un-acquainted
with Civilization’s superficial modes,
the earth and the sea providing
the things they need. . . .

“They did not covet anything we had, 260
would pass our heaps of equipment — left
by our wooders and waterers lying on the beach —
not seeming to notice it;
and they despised our gifts,
spurning our advances,
desiring nothing but for us to go.”

To Joseph Banks,
more interested in plants than savages,
New Holland natives were of small account.

The botany of this Land
brought a light to his eyes,
and caused his heart to pound in ecstasy.

270

Devoted to his Science,
he did good work, and carried back to England
a marvellous store of specimens — new knowledge,
but a cursory, thin opinion of the natives.

“These people,” he said, “are cowards. They run away
whenever they see us. They even run from Tupia.

“Solander and myself, we wander freely.

“Myself in the woods,” wrote Joseph, “botanizing,
and quite devoid of fear.”

280

But the Kurin-gai
observed him carefully, and mimicked him,
long after, in their play-corroborees.

[*The Kurin-gai*]

*The Kurin-gai
talked much at the friendly Borah
with inland Tribes,
and delighted all with the new Corroboree,
hilarious mimicry of Banka Banka.*

*The Corroboree came after
the serious narration,
was presented when intensity flagged
and discussion became repetition.*

290

*The Corroboree then started
the whole story again,
this to be discussed over and over.*

*"We had our food to get,
and some of us were fishing at this time.*

*"We carried our canoes along the beach.
The big canoe, like a whale,
was moving in deep water.*

300

*"We went out fishing,
watching for fish,
our spears held ready
for the silver flash.*

*"We could not keep our eyes on what
the big canoe was doing.*

*"We hoped it would move on quickly out of the way.
So long as it moved on past our Coast,
it would not worry us.*

*"But, at one point and another, creatures from it — 310
strange men, with extraordinary skins about them —
climbed into smaller canoes, yet bigger than ours,
and paddled close to the shore.*

*"They made impudent inspection of our Coast,
waving to us,
and calling to us,
as if it were right they should land —
as if it were a thing to be expected —
and as if formality were of no importance;
but we turned our backs on them,*

320

*and they returned to the big canoe,
as if they were the aggrieved party.*

*"In the Bay, though, in the Bay, past Givea,
where they stopped some days with their big canoe,
there was no preventing their aggression.*

*"We did not like their approach.
They did not stay off-shore quietly in the one place
to await our attention.*

*We did not want them anywhere near,
but, had they sat down off-shore,
it would have been proper in us
to accord them the privilege of strangers.*

330

*"Their coming was arrogant and hostile,
as if the Law were nothing and did not exist.*

*"When they brought their big canoe into the Bay,
they did not wait for our acknowledgment;
they climbed into their little canoes without waiting,
and prepared to land.*

*"Two of our men took up a stand on the beach
to signify taboo against their trespassing,
their act of war against us.*

340

*"But the strangers were assertive,
obstinate in bad manners.*

*"They demanded,
in a very awkward sign-language,
water —
throwing us a number of gifts*

*that were paltry, insulting barter
for so precious a thing as water.*

*"And they were many — a whole mob of them
looking for water from our sacred places.* 350

*"But when we sought to prevent them landing in our
Country,
they produced magic sticks that struck from many paces,
sticks they pointed, like the pointing bone,
but with less ceremony.*

*"Those sticks spat fire; they thundered.
They made a burning smell —
not like the friendly burning
of branches and bark and leaves,
but a smell that made us think
of the black Spirit of Death, of evil
spirits that creep in the night.* 360

*"The sticks bit into the flesh from a distance
with powerful little stones the Medicine Men
have drawn out
and sung over.*

*"Shields were of no use against that magic,
which forced all before it.*

*"Our Medicine Men put curses upon the strangers,
but without effect.* 370
*The strangers walked about our Land,
as if they would take from us
as much as they wanted
and use it for their own.*

*"They dug soaks in our Country
and took the water.*

*"They killed our parrots and our lorikeets
with their magic sticks.*

*"For magic such as this
Kurin-gai have no answer.*

380

*"We could not understand.
We called our Councils.
All we could do was to call and hold our Councils,
and hope for them to go.*

*"Our people were well-behaved.
After some vain attempts
to frighten the strangers away,
it was decided to avoid them.*

*"Our spears were useless against them;
so we watched them,
and, when they saw us, we hurried away.*

390

*"These people are no respecters of the Law.
They use their magic sticks against the Law.
These law-breakers had no regard for our sacred places,
none for our rights of possession.
They came without due ceremony
and walked about our Country.*

*"The makers-of-magic claim
that they drove the strangers away,
but it took a long time
to put in in the minds of the strangers to go.*

400

*"Their faces are the colour of pipe-clay
mixed with a little ochre,
except for one who was notable,
being more like us.*

*"His brothers of the deep-sea
called him Tjupa. He behaved as they,
not as the Kurin-gai.*

*"And there was a young pale man, inclined to fatness 410
like a good woman,
yet a very foolish pale young man,
always stooping
close to the ground,
peering at flowers and grasses,
picking handfuls of leaves, and digging up plants.*

*"This Banka was presumptuous, ill-mannered and wrong
in all he did,
but he looked so funny we had to laugh at him.*

*"We have made up a Corroboree about Banka, 420
the foolish young man on his knees, gazing so hard
at flowers and grasses which we know so well,
as if he had never seen
anything like them before.*

*"See our Corroboree of Banka.
This is our Corroboree about Banka."*

[The Corroboree about Banka Banka]

*"I am Banka Banka.
I am the Hunter of grasses and flowers.
I dig up anything that grows in the ground.*

*I pick as many leaves as I can hold from the trees,
I move about on my knees.* 430

*"Awkward I am, and clumsy, like a dying kangaroo,
with my head drooping to the ground.*

*"Suddenly I drop down.
No, I am not a dying kangaroo: I have found something.
Look, it is a blade of grass!*

*"Now I carry all these victims of my morning's
hunting —
these yams and berries and leaves and bunches of grass;
I carry all these victims down to the beach.*

*"Now I spread them out, very carefully I spread them
out, 440
very carefully I spread them out on my great rugs under
the Sun.*

*"Come and help me get more leaves and grass, more
flowers.
There are more than I can carry, in the Country of the
Kurin-gai.
Help me carry as many as possible of the victims of
my hunting,
so that I can spread them out on my great rugs under
the Sun.*

*"Come, my brothers, help me. I am Banka Banka,
I am the Hunter of grasses and flowers."*

[The "Endeavour's" Progress]

From Botany Bay, the place of his first landing,

Cook sailed the *Endeavour* north along the Coast . . .
coming abreast of a bay in which appeared 450
good anchorage, but, fair wind filling the sails,
not entering there, but naming it Port Jackson . . .

missing the full discovery of that Harbour
the whole World envies, formed of sunken valleys
married to waters of the Pacific Ocean,
and busy hostess now to ships of the Nations . . .
sailing along a Coast where low hills snouted,
like primitive amphibians, into the sea . . .

passing and naming Port Stephens . . .

night and day,
observing the smoke and the fires of native people 460
fires strung on the beaches and hills, denoting
a numerous population which watched the course
of the ship, *Endeavour*, sailing in those seas —
sailing through the balmy Southern Winter . . .

the height of the Land increasing. . . .

Captain Cook
charting the Eastern shoreline of New Holland . . .
north, north, by Moreton Bay . . .

then west around
the spit that breaks the south-east heave of Ocean
at Sandy Cape . . .

and entering Bustard Bay.

Banks shot a bustard here, a native turkey, 470
which made good eating . . .

and the company
admired, as ever, the beauty of the birds
that flashed in Southland skies . . .

but here the soil
was sandy; all the natives had departed,
before the white men landed, leaving only
their empty shelters, made of bark and branches,
as evidence of mortal tenancy . . .

while, far away in the distance, smoke-wisps showed
where nomads wandered spacious hunting grounds.

The *Endeavour*, moving from this lonely bay, 480
and passing Capricorn, was in the channels
between the mainland and the Barrier Reef.

[*The Barrier Reef*]

The Barrier Reef stands guard upon the Coast
of the Great South Land through ages piled on ages,
as heavy rollers of the vast and strong
Pacific Ocean pile over and over the crescents
of coral bastions facing to the weathers. . . .

The Barrier Reef stands guard through days and years
and centuries and aeons, in sun and rain,
beneath the blazing stars and radiant moon. . . . 490

The Barrier Reef stands guard . . .

and Captain Cook
unwittingly outwitted its defences,
coming behind them from the south — to find

his ship ensnared and threatened, every side,
by the beautiful, cruel waiting fangs of coral.

What Spaniards, Portuguese or Dutchmen sailed
within those treacherous coral streams before him?

Relics there are . . . relics . . . and Rumour's tongue . . .
and the words of the waters talking eternally,
in thunders and whispers . . . thunders and whispers of
water . . . 500

and stars there are, stars in the sounding night . . .
the wind-fleck on the waves; the curl of the breaker,
whose lip sneers in derision at our wonder. . . .

Lights glint and shine on the water in day and darkness,
and the Barrier Reef, which men have sailed and charted,
holds fast those secrets men may not discover. . . .

Men may not come at those secrets from south or north;
men must be satisfied with words of water,
the voice of the wind, the cognizance of stars . . .

and Nature will only tell us what we know, 510
and teach us to question still her Mysteries.

The waters of our North Pacific Coast
have told me, for certain, the name of Nagamasa,
the pirate of old Japan . . . and they have said
words faint and undistinguishable for names
of ships and captains and sailormen of the past,
who came from Japan and China, Malay and Java,
and Spain and Portugal and the Netherlands. . . .

The Barrier Reef, the Barrier Reef stands guard. . . .

There are a million pools of lambent light, 520
drinking the sunbeams into emerald depths,
where gloom and glow make one warm iridescence
within the under-water gardens, gay
and sombre all at once.

The coral gardens
have vales and crests of exquisite appearance,
outvying fantasy with bold designs
and delicate traceries, presenting caves
and temples, rich in lure as Persian myth,
and rich as Arab mosques in tapestries.

Within the coral gardens of the Reef 530
go fish as bright as birds that match the dawn
with feather and colour, fish with scarlet bodies
and fins that flash like blue and golden wings
through rainbow-vegetation. . . .

There the flowers
bloom fabulously — brittle and succulent,
and weeds and grasses are wrought as strands of fire. . . .

The very dross of coral pools may be
as bright as blood, like locks of mermaids lit
with tides of sunset on raised ocean floors. . . .

Menaced by sharp-teethed gar or savage shark, 540
the flying fish, with swift, convulsive surge,
races, its tail on water, body in air,
races on wave-tops, then soars fast and far
into the light of sunset, sinking in mist
of coloured spray, free in those coral realms. . . .

Rich green and purple, fawn and mottled brown,
flamboyant and beautiful, grow giant clams. . . .

The tentacles of sea-anemones
possess the colours of the brightest fabrics;
and, richer still and far more delicate, 550
the tube-worms waver tentacles of fire. . . .

Profusion of colour . . . sunset and sunrise
vivid beneath the waters of the Reef . . .
emerald, purple, crimson and dazzle of gold. . . .
Here is where beauty hides away from men,
in the pools of the Barrier Reef, in the lustrous pools.

Beauty abides with terror on the Reef. . . .

There under the waters is the voracious killing,
merciless slaughter of the weak by the strong,
and the strong by the stronger, more adaptable — 560
the law of the jungle under the coral waters . . .

and the jagged jaws of the coral, the beautiful fangs,
sharp white, sea-green, sea-blue, the colour of blood,
wait under the calm and the ruffled waters for ships,
wait silent and still for ships and the bodies of men.

What history of the Great South Land has been
scratched on the splintering timbers of vanished ships?

[*In the Coral Channels*]

The *Endeavour* pent in perilous coral channels
between the Barrier Reef and the Southland Coast . . .

a leadsman kept in the chains, an officer
alert at the mast-head, scanning the water for
danger . . . 570

soundings irregular . . .

Captain Cook concerned . . .

the ground magnetic, putting the compass astray.

With Banks and Solander, Cook went twice ashore
to look for water, but discovered none,
recording disappointment in the name
of Thirsty Sound.

He sailed the *Endeavour* on
through Whitsunday Passage with a south-east wind,
keeping close to the shore, seeking a bay
convenient for anchorage, there to make
a further search for water . . .

entering
the latitude of islands of renown,
found long before by Ferdinand de Quiros . . .
and making comment in his *Journal*, touching
the wild conjectures of geographers
who tacked these islands to the Southland Coast.

580

[The "*Endeavour* on the Reef]

The *Endeavour*, on a night of clearest moonlight,
fair breeze behind, and twenty fathoms of water
below her keel, moved forward, in what seemed
a broad, safe channel in those coral seas.

Suddenly, alarm was raised by the leadsman,
who shouted:

590

“Eleven fathoms!”

Then, before
he could make another throw, the ship had struck —
struck hard, stuck fast, on the lurking Endeavour Reef!

The *Endeavour*, caught on coral at peak of tide!

The sails were taken in; boats hoisted out
to examine the depth of water around the ship.

She had been lifted over a sunken ledge,
lay — buffeted, struggling prisoner — in a hollow,
clouted and kicked by the regular waves, and beating
herself on the captor reef till those on deck 600
could hardly stand to carry out their orders.

There was no panic, no insubordination,
as mastered the wrecked *Batavia*, long before,
on Houtman's Abrolhos on the Western Coast.

The officers and crew toiled without rest.
All hands joined now in breathless clearing of ship.
Hoops, staves and empty casks went overboard;
some of the carpenter's and boatswain's stores,
with oil-jars, firewood, stone and iron ballast,
went overboard to lighten the tortured vessel. 610

“By the light of the moon,” wrote Cook, “in our distress,
we saw the sheathing-boards from the vessel's bottom
float all around her, saw the false keel drift
away upon the waters. We expected
the sea to rush through the ship at any moment,
carrying all before it, drowning us all;

but with the ebb of tide, the *Endeavour* settled more quietly on the reef.

“The daylight came,
and eight leagues distant, over the water, was land. . . .

“The wind that had blown all night
died down in the morning. 620
We had dead calm. . . .

“Good weather was an indescribable blessing;
a gale
would have destroyed the ship.

“At next high water, with the anchors out,
we sought to heave her off. Yet daylight-tide
was lower than the night-tide, and we failed.
The *Endeavour* would not lift from the coral-ledge.

“We lightened her further, jettisoning all gear 630
that could be spared.

“The water gained. The pumps,
incessantly worked, could scarcely keep it down.

“With the fall of tide, the *Endeavour* heeled to starboard,
and we had to wait for the next night-tide to right her.

[*Crisis and Escape*]

“We got all ready, with anchors carefully placed,
and blocks and tackle handy to give us purchase
upon the cables.

“At night, at nine o’clock,
we heaved the *Endeavour* clear; but the water gained,
and the men were too exhausted to work the pumps
beyond the shortest spells . . .

“and now we faced 640
a dreadful crisis. It seemed that the ship must sink
beneath our feet. The boat could not
accommodate us all. Faces were white
aboard the *Endeavour*. Men’s faces showed
one dread anticipation: reason gone,
there would be struggle for place in the boats,
command destroyed,
destruction of us all.

“The minutes were terrible then. . . .

“When hope was flimsiest,
Midshipman Monkhouse urged a desperate measure, 650
recalling experience of a ship’s escape
from dire extremity by fothering.

“Midshipman Monkhouse surely saved our lives.
We passed beneath the ship and over the leak
a studding-sail, with oakum, bits of wood
and sheep-dung stitched upon it. The rush of water
carried the filthy mixture, making a plug,
into the broken timbers, stopping them up.”

[At *Endeavour* River]

Cook sent the boats to find a clean white beach,
where the ship might have a haven for repair; 660

and the *Endeavour* followed to Endeavour River,
was there hove down . . .

hove down at Endeavour River,
near where the modern Cooktown holds its place
unique in national tradition.

Walking
the beach at Cooktown now, a man may say:

Here Captain Cook came with his ship, *Endeavour*.
He beached her here; saw, from the hill nearby,
the maze of reefs and shoals beneath the water;
marvelled at his miraculous escape;
and felt a chill in his spine at the task ahead 670
of pitting his wits against the lurking dangers
to pilot the patched-up vessel through to safety.

Here was a staging built before the beaching,
by which all possible weight was brought to land.
The *Endeavour* was brought as high as the crew could
get her;
and, when the tide went out, Cook walked around her. . . .

Here, on this beach beside the Endeavour River,
Cook walked around the ship, now high and dry,
and looked at the damage to her wounded timbers,
placed both his hands on the coral-bitten planks, 680
remarked how cleanly the coral jaws had sheared
them. . . .

He ran his fingers over the hard, sharp lump
of coral which had snapped, as a wedge, in the rent —
surprising circumstance without which ship
and officers and crew must have been doomed. . . .

Cook watched while sailors drew away the mess
of oakum, wood and dung that clung to the coral.

Here on the beach beside Endeavour River,
the work of repair advanced; the ship was cleaned
inside and out; the rigging was gone over. . . . 690

While hammers rang, and carpenters busied themselves
with plank and saw, the sick were placed in tents.
Here, in this sunny climate, they recovered
on diet of fish caught from the rocks inshore
and turtle caught on the reefs. . . .

On fish and turtle,
Tupia, ailing with scurvy after months
of shipboard food, recovered; then spent his days
at fishing in the sunlight — warm, life-giving
as sunlight of his own beloved Tahiti —
or wandering in the wild, bird-haunted bush. . . . 700

The sailors made excursions, during leisure,
and wondered at the dragon-shapes of trees,
the tattered eucalypts that sprawled and groped
across the earth like monsters of the past,
and lifted their writhen limbs against the sky
of dawn or sundown — branches blazing fire,
or into the shimmer of blue and burning day . . .

and one of the sailors, having tramped alone,
returned to his companions in excitement,
eyes starting in fear, limbs shaking, and his tongue 710
stammering, cleaving to the roof of his mouth
as he told of the Devil. He had seen the Devil,
he said, insisted. With his own two eyes,
he saw Him — “like a gallon cagg,

the size of a gallon cagg, and black, with wings;
an' on 'is 'ead wus horns. He crep' along,
so slow, so close to me, I could 'ave put
my 'and to touch 'im, but I wus afeard!"

The naturalists decided he had seen
a bat — which, to a superstitious sailor,
walking primaeval bushland from a ship
in the time of Captain Cook might well appear
with sudden terrors for imagination.

720

Beside the Endeavour River, Joseph Banks
delighted in the novel face of Nature,
collected plants, observed the fiery birds,
took in his mind indelible impressions
of this vast, lonely, ancient Southern Land.

Banks went, with Gore and Tupia, exploring
inland along the winding watercourse.

They camped one night at the side of Endeavour
River,

730

were plagued from sundown till the coloured dawn
by fierce mosquitoes, which, in hungry hordes,
attacked incessantly and ruined sleep.

Weary, the party welcomed smite of day.

Upon this expedition, greyhounds started
a kangaroo. . . .

The splendid creature bounded,
with mighty leaps, above high grass that hindered
the dogs' pursuit, and rapidly escaped. . . .

Banks saw a wolf, he said, with pointed ears —
the native dog, the warrigal, the dingo. . . .

740

He saw the flying fox, the fruit-bat. . . .

Flash,
O flash-and-screech! O whiteness in the sunlight!
Swift whirr and veer through shadow-and-light of
branches!
Exuberant, strident birds —

the cockatoos,
dazzle-in-sunlight, screeching through the trees. . . .

And Joseph Banks, with his companions, made
first friendly English contact with the natives,
during this tramp along Endeavour River,
finding the Land's Own People not to be
acquisitive for paper, beads or nails,
which had excited natives of Tahiti,
and not prepared to give away their weapons . . .

750

the People of Alcheringa, who needed
the well-wrought instruments of their subsistence,
jealously guarding spears and wommeras. . . .

The natives followed the party to the ship . . .

and later demanded a turtle which they saw
upon the deck.

Could white men understand
the native ownership?

Turtle belonged
to those upon whose territory it was.
The strangers came as lawless visitors,
without formality or invitation . . .

760

and, being accepted nevertheless, withheld
just distribution of the Tribe's own food. . . .

Indignant, angry tribesmen turned away
from the *Endeavour*, and sought to fire the stores
the strangers had on shore, but were dispersed
with shot from a gun. . . .

Thus was the pattern
set mildly for a bloodier, grimmer future —
the Law of Reciprocation for good or evil
doomed to futility before the strong,
presumptuous self-assertion of the whites.

770

[*Leaving the Reef*]

The *Endeavour* sailed from the River. The Captain knew
reefs to extend beyond his reconnoitring,
yet was amazed to find their vast extent.
The ship was still in danger. . . .

Day after day,
the reefs spread on the course.

Suddenly,
the water would shoal.

The wind becoming strong,
Cook brought the ship to anchor, and he himself
climbed to the mast-head, whence he noted perils
about him on all sides. . . .

780

"I was at loss,"
he wrote, "which way to steer when it was safe
to open the sails again."

He worked to north,
and cleared a cape, at sight of which he thought
the reefs were at an end.

The Barrier Reef
continued on and on. He named the point of land
Cape Flattery . . .

and still he found the ship
embayed with isles and reefs. . . .

He climbed to the top
of the highest isle, one day, from which he saw
the outer edge of the Reef; and, the pinnacle leading, 790
the *Endeavour* sailed through the maze to open sea.

[*A Narrow Escape; Return to the Channels*]

The *Endeavour*, beyond the Reef, in open sea,
lost sight of land upon the second day.

Cook brought her in towards the Reef again,
for his intention was to find a passage,
if such there were, between New Holland shores
and those of South New Guinea. . . .

The *Endeavour* sailing northward near the Reef. . . .
mauled and pushed by the strong Pacific rollers 800
closer and closer to the terrible coral —
closer and closer till there seemed no hope
to any aboard that they could live beyond
some sudden awful moment of destruction,
violent and soon . . .

but the ebbing tide
and a miracle of wind, a sudden puff
that came across the Reef, preserved the ship;
and the Captain brought her safely through at last
to the land-ward side again.

“Relief,” he said,
“which we had felt on reaching open sea,
was nothing compared with that experienced now
on being able to anchor safe in the channels.” 810

With boat-men sounding, leadsman in the chains,
and frequent anchoring, the ship pursued
a slow way northward through the coral maze,
Cook keeping, as far as possible, within
the channels nearest shore, intent to miss
none leading through to Carpentaria.

Sailing a devious course as days went by,
the *Endeavour* came at last to a throng of islands,
which Cook perceived, on climbing one of them,
to stretch for thirteen leagues towards the west. 820

Here was a passage through, below New Guinea
to the outer waters of Carpentaria. . . .

[*Possession Island*]

The flag was hoisted on Possession Island,
and the Eastern Coast of wild New Holland claimed,
with all its harbours and rivers, all its islands,
by name of New South Wales, for the King of England.

While Janszoon's ghost, upon a ghostly *Duyfken*,
scouted imaginary shores of a guess-work gulf
to sight Cape York Peninsula, the *Endeavour*
came from the east and cut the phantom wake. . . . 830

While Carstensz and his ghostly company,
with wraiths of *Arnhem* and *Pera*, paused and turned
their course to south from Drooge Bocht, the *Endeavour*
crossed boldly over their uncertain wake,
moved westward, westward to Batavia —

Batavia and sorrow, for here were fevers
to walk aboard the *Endeavour* and strike at the crew
and officers and scientific men,
who, under the Captain's care and wise precautions,
had sailed the seas of the World in happy health. . . . 840

Now surgeon Monkhouse and astronomer Green,
Molyneux, master, and Lieutenant Hicks,
and a number of sturdy sailors sickened and died. . . .

The spirit of Tupia fled to fair Mehani,
the Sacred Hill of Ra'i-atea — the home,
Hawaiki of heroic ancestors. . . .

No Tupia stood in the flesh at the bows of a ship,
excited to see the palms of his own Tahiti
shine to the view across the heaving Ocean;
but Tupia's soul is bright and brave in the annals
of all Mankind until the end of Time. . . . 850

in years when Cook was dead . . .

Sir Joseph Banks, in England, sometimes stood
beside his study window, in the twilight,
his mind caught on the winds of far romance 880
blowing from bushlands of the distant South
and laden with breath of eucalypt and scent
of most unusual flowers . . . Oh, faint and elusive
fragrance of ocean-sundered New South Wales! . . .

and vivid pictures of the Southland skies
would blossom and blaze within imagination. . . .
Ah! fires of the ancient hills, the straggling trees. . . .
Ah! mystery of beauty, untamed in the heart. . . .
Ah! peace that was savage in onslaught into memory. . . . 890
Solitude strident and beautiful with birds,
the brilliant birds of the South, the birds, the birds!

Sir Joseph Banks would mutter to himself:

"Never were brighter birds that flock the skies
above the tattered trees. Their breasts are crimson,
glaring green, and flaring flames of yellow . . . wings
as multi-coloured as the fiery dawn . . .
their cries burst from the very dawn of life."

BOOK ELEVEN

Invasion

[*The Dreaming of Biāmi*]

Biāmi, Biāmi . . . what do you dream,
with the fires of your own Land nightly burning
in the camps of the earth and the camps of the sky?
what do you dream?

I dream of these things.

BUT ARYAN AND SEMITE FIGHT IN THE NORTH;
DARIUS AND AUGUSTUS CLASH WITH THEIR POWERS.

*Consider the lights of a billabong,
changing, changing, night and day;
listen to the clamour of dawn-bright birds* 10
*that spear through tattered bushland branches;
look in the timid eyes of euros. . . .*

A leaf drops down to summer earth. . . .

ZOROASTER, JESUS, BUDDHA AND MOHAMMED
BUILD THEIR GREAT RELIGIONS OVER THE SEA.

*Now from camps on the inland ranges. . . .
Now from camps on the brooding plains. . . .
Now from camps on ocean-beaches . . .
under the stars, come corroboree chants. . . .*

SPICE SHIPS OF PORTUGAL, GOLD GALLEONS OF SPAIN, 20
PLUNGE THROUGH THE SEAS TO MALACCA AND MANILA.

*The Sun-woman, Yhi, draws hair-string pendants
over her eyes in the coloured west.*

THE MERCHANTS OF HOLLAND ARE SAILING THERE.

*Boobooks are calling, and possums are out.
Moonlight is silver on the gully crests.
The fires of the People . . .*

THE FIRES OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE SINKING SOON
FOREVER.

ELEVEN SHIPS ARE COMING WITH THE OUTCASTS OF
ENGLAND.

THEY HAVE LANDED, THE INVADERS, THE BREAKERS,
THE DESTROYERS.

30

THEIR MAGIC IS DEATH TO THE CHILDREN OF BIAMI,
AND KURIN-GAI ARE DYING.

*The Dreaming of Biامي is a deathless Dreaming;
the Dreaming of Biامي is Spirit Life, undying.
My People are with me for ever and ever.*

[Convicts in Sydney]

There is a clanking, clanking at Sydney Cove —
among the grey-green eucalyptus trees,
the white-limbed, writhen eucalyptus trees,
and giant pines, beside the running Stream —
the dragging march of feet, the shuffle-and-clank,
the shuffle-and-clank of men. . . .

40

Sag-shouldered men —
with sallow, scrubby faces, and eyes that shift
and stare through clouded hope and muffled hate —
stumble and march along the wearing years
that raise a prison-town of hard grey stone
about their ordered comings and goings; stumble

and strain, destroying and stamping down
their own dull, wretched lives to make the highways
others may walk with ease . . .

others who know,
who hear, but do not feel, the whistle-and-swish 50
of the lash, the lash — the thongs that bite and weal
the bodies of men stretched raw upon the triangles. . . .

Fear now the redcoats; fear the convict-foreman;
toil as a chain-gang slave; know as a slave
the clock-like clang of the Penitentiary gates,
and solitary confinement — a man no longer
permitted manliness, and going mad. . . .

Pinchgut is ugly, its point of rock a gibbet.

The face of life is vile at Sydney Cove —
a haven of Alcheringa invaded 60
by sordidness and vice from oversea.

[*The Land's Beauty*]

*This Land's strange beauty goads the heart's resentment
with red and smouldering strength of dawns that burst
in the fierce white heat of day. Ah, shimmering hillocks
around Port Jackson coves! Ah, native bush,
brittle and bright, and brittle and dull, in glare
of the battering sun; mysterious under stars!
Savage and lonely Land, no home for the heart
frustrated beyond endurance and chained to codes
fashioned in lands where Freedom is but a name, 70
the cant of Privilege, the badge of Power. . . .
Oh, grave and beautiful Country, old yet young;*

*uncompromising, hard, but slowly winning
 allegiance from the dregs of the bitter heart
 which, here and there, discovers, gradually,
 rare comfort of solitude, till, realizing
 the gulf between this Land and distant Europe,
 it leaps the gulf in miraculous sympathy
 with the stern, not crafty, character of Nature
 society's grim formulae can never* 80
*destroy, but only botchily constrain. . . .
 Great, primitive Country, home for the heart that sheds
 pernicious bonds, hypnotic fallacies, -
 not loyalties but shackles of illusion;
 home for the heart that heeds the challenge to fare
 away from a past unloved and not to return —
 to seek, through faith and toil, a future of promise.*

[*Alien Life*]

Consider the upas plant of alien life
 set evilly upon a Continent
 that knew brave communes from the dawn of Time; 90
 observe the scum of the North — the convict scoundrels,
 the sullen, arrowed men of vicious crime,
 attired in yellow-and-black; the nondescript
 more fortunate condemned, the assignees
 and ticket-of-leave men and emancipists;
 and strutting soldiers, redcoat jailers, lured
 from dingy prospects by the bribe-recruiting.

All note the profit of trading — even those
 whom birth had branded as superior
 now superciliously upsetting scruple, 100
 careering rough-shod over it to fortune.

Observe the shaping of lustier, cruder standards —
created in a raw community
reticulate with vice, abnormal profit;
instinct with ruthless vision; endorsing dreams
of satisfaction which the British Isles
denied to convict and to lowly born.

The blood, the blood pumps through its mortal veins
in pain and sadism, terror and despair,
in lustful triumph, quiet happiness . . . 110
the blood asserts its power for good and evil;
and the mortal cells of the brain in the head, perceiving,
construing, planning, scheming, for good and evil,
are the servants of the blood to work its will
or fail and perish in the dire attempt . . .
and the blood burns coarse and strong in early Sydney;
the blood burns rich, or chills in misery;
and the brain grows cunning and follows the chance of
power,
or faints and fails, or, sometimes, here and there,
is — tired but calm — obedient to honour. 120

Sydney Town . . . conceived in horrible union
of Crime and Sorrow, sullyng a scene
of wild and rugged beauty in the South;
born in pangs of hatred and starvation;
nourished on vice and greed and slavery;
haunted by heartless grace, rude swagger, abandon
of rogues and tricksters — confidence men from London;
rebels from Ireland; thieves from every county;
pickpockets, burglars, murderers, embezzlers,
poachers and forgers; men from every walk 130
of life in the British Isles, rejected of Britain. . . .

The deeds of some would not, today, be reckoned

as crimes at all; yet these were chained in dark
 ship-dungeons for despatch across the ocean
 to New South Wales — political prisoners,
 and trespassers, and petty thieves, whose first
 offences brought harsh laws upon their heads,
 transported them over the sea to sink or swim
 within the quagmire of Old Sydney Town. . . .
 Old Sydney . . . Sydney . . . destined to outlive 140
 the dark and lurid times of its beginning;
 destined, in spite of all its scars, to be
 a City of Freedom, notable, superb —
 commanding the trade of the World, the admiration
 and pilgrimage of folk of every land.

[*Phillip*]

See Governor Arthur Phillip, the benign,
 firm-natured autocrat. . . . In him perceive
 the saving graces of that Old World, left
 twelve thousand miles away, yet ghosting here. . . .
 This is the greatest man of early Sydney — 150
 and not in office only, not merely in status:
 his heart is a strong and brimming source of goodness,
 wisdom and justice, pitted against the wrongs
 corroding souls of privileged and felon;
 a man of iron will who follows duty
 with conscience, mercy and determination;
 Phillip, receiving niggard help from England,
 small heed for all the troubles and the dangers
 confronting jail-beginnings of New South Wales;
 Phillip, whom Fate assaults with accidents — 160
 ships gone astray, and cattle lost in the bush;
 Phillip, denied the loyalty of some
 whose part it is to help him — officers

whose selfishness would damn authority;
 Phillip, who takes no favour for himself
 beyond the portion meted out to others,
 who courts no popularity, who binds
 himself and officers to common rations
 with prisoners in period of famine. . . .
 Phillip, whose vision soars into the Future 170
 to limn and grasp a wonderful ideal
 beyond the murk of penal settlement —
 a fertile State, belying its begetting:
 cultured and prosperous, excelled by none. . . .
 Phillip, the prison despot, yet the author
 and father of a proud and free Australia;
 racked in health by strain and opposition,
 yet leaving a brave example of Truth and Honour
 which cannot fade in any season of vice.

[*A Nation's Beginnings*]

Here is a Nation's beginning, with Governor Phillip, 180
 his naval officers, and, later, the shrewd
 exploiting Combination of the Corps.

Here is a Nation's beginning, with Major Grose,
 Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson, John Macarthur
 and Major Johnston, lords of the Regiment.

Here is a Nation's beginning . . . lavish lands
 bestowed by favouritism on men whose muscles
 swell not like those of Ruse, the honest convict,
 first man-on-the-land to bring, with shovel and hoe, 190
 a nurtured fruitage from Australian soil.

Here is Nation's beginning, with sweat and groan

of convict workmen, building roads and houses
in early Sydney . . . building the pelf of soldiers.

Behold the affectation, large estates,
pretence to aristocracy, the dull
upstart plebians aping their English betters.

Here is a Nation's beginning, with whaling, sealing,
wood-cutting, carriage-making, quarrying,
illicit stills, sly grog shops, drinking dens — 200
emancipists and Yankee whalers lurching
drunken amid the warren of the Rocks.

These are the days of Rum Monopoly,
insidious craving for spirits in the town
unleashed and brought to blaze of ruination
for the desperate and weak, to swift enrichment
of ruthless and exploiting officers
who corner cargoes of ships at lowest cost
and sell for extravagant profit — holding, in rum,
the key to many a fortune; holding in rum, 210
the bribe and balm to many a tortured conscience.

A hogshead buys two hundred acres of land;
a keg will buy a house; a sot, perhaps,
will sell a decent wife for keeps for a keg —
she glad of the bargain, too, in early Sydney.

The Rum Monopolists, employing fraud
to cheat the Law, out-face vice-regal edicts
in greed for gain, for fruits of dominance —
the Rum Monopolists, destroying the power
of Governors Hunter and King, arresting Bligh; 220
hounding opponents to bankruptcy and ruin,
and instigating slander and false report

to blacken their names and bring them to discredit . . .
the Rum Monopolists, who recognize
no limit to their harsh prerogatives,
forceful and cunning in all their operations,
drastic and swift, effective, in their action;
directing a convict locksmith, on the voyage,
to rifle official despatches to London, leaving
the padlocked box without them, holding only 230
out-dated English journals, which cannot
advise recall of the Corps, indict Macarthur.

Here is a Nation's beginning, with manufacture —
Boston and Ellis, on Governor Hunter's licence,
preparing salt, and soap, and curing fish.

Here is a Nation's beginning, with men of varied
status and history, the free and bond,
Australia's founders, the builders of a Nation . . . 240
a myriad men, a motley of characters . . .
Governors, lawyers, traders, murderers,
parsons, squatters, thieves. . . .

Here a beginning,
with Phillip, Collins, Hunter, Tench, Macarthur,
King, Reiby, Cooper, Campbell, Barrington,
Blight, Johnston, Greenway, Simeon Lord, Macquarie,
and our hundred other early famous men —
ghosts in the streets of a modern metropolis,
Exclusives and Emancipists and Lags.

[*The Children*]

The bullock-wagons strain through dusty streets 250
in Sydney Town of old time, fully laden

with goods from Hawkesbury and Parramatta,
watched by the rowdy urchins out in the sun,
playing in front of houses and shops, their limbs
straight and supple and healthy, grubby yet lit
with the glowing warmth and strength of the Southern
Land.

Their eyes are keen, are frank, are full of mischief. . . .

The energy of these children is not matched
in older communities, in foggier climes. . . .

The children of the South, though times are evil, 260
have priceless blessings which will mount in the future,
derived from the sun, and the breath of bush and sea.

The fathers and mothers of many of them are lags,
but their children's children will fight in the cause of
Freedom.

[*The Women Convicts*]

The women convicts quickly settle in
to the beck and call of Sydney . . .

women tossed
on tides of male expedience and lust;
women caught by vices of the town —
the mistresses of soldiers, molls of convicts. . . .

The women transportees — or those with looks, 270
not too habitual in prudery
to use their wits — have all the town at their feet;
and some are tartars, and some are honest women.

Reiby is lucky with that girl of his.

Tom, the ship's Officer, is not too proud
to marry Mary Haydock.

The dark cloud
is evaporated, witched away, by her kiss.

She tends his business and makes money.

Little bonneted widow of this
picture; rather funny —
with a strong-as-granite dignity even so,
eyes alight still, though cheeks no longer glow.

280

. . . Today my feet walked singing in her Lane.
In that silent, drab and grey place, ghosts in my brain
thronged, History's strangers. . . .

There I searched, as though
to find that sweet little horse-thief of so long ago.

[The White Men's Magic]

*The natives watch, remote in their darkened Towri,
the lights go up in the town of the harsh invader,
the natives who pine and sicken and die, harassed
by powerful magic which they cannot match —
the beginning of Nation, a convict town,
with its sorrow and shame, its striving and success,
its cameos of toil and pain and wrong,
its currents of love and hate, its good and evil.*

290

Officer traders, the Rum Monopolists,
and clever, steely-couraged Emancipists —
with interests clashing, selfish alike for profit —
defeat the narrow, querulous domination
of Southern Trade by Old John Company.

Simeon Lord despatches ships to China 300
and far-away Peru; he fashions plans
for conquest of New Zealand; is ambitious
in local industry and manufacture,
amassing wealth with daring genius —
old lag, whose enterprise a Nation must honour. . . .

Macarthur sends his cedar-wood to China. . . .

See Robert Campbell, freeman, at Campbell's Wharf,
surveying shipping there; Campbell the merchant,
the banker to freemen and convicts, scrupulous 310
and trusted in his dealings, benefactor
to public causes, splendid pioneer.

Samuel Terry — if you could tear off the shirt
from his back, you'd find the lash's signature —
is worth a fortune now.

He's up at the Store,
or, maybe, at his Tavern, The Seven Stars. . . .

At neither place? — Of course not; there's a meeting,
the Bank Board meets today; he's there, for sure —
Mr. Terry, Rothschild of Botany Bay;
a shrewd man, a good man; come, sharp and
diamond-true,
from under the feet of men to be their envy. 320

[*The Human Soul*]

Terry, Meehan, Underwood, many others,
claimed by the System, are proving the human soul
superior to circumstance, and able
to mould the features of a drab defeat
to the face and character of dignity.

Our Nation's beginning, in crude and lusty times,
in vortices of horror, winds of fear. . . .

Courage strives onward, upward, soaring with wings
of prophecy towards a shining Future. . . .

Honesty standing firm, with faith unflinching. . . . 330

[*The Land Aloof*]

*The Land, the sombre, colour-flashing Country
of rock-ribbed ranges, rolling bush and far,
grass-covered or barren plains, lies still aloof
from the small, grim, parasitic settlements
clinging on the fringe of its ageless beauty —
the upas-growth of white invasion spreading
to Hobart, Moreton Bay, Port Phillip Bay,
with clank of chain and reek of rum and blight
of Man's materialistic, selfish mind.*

[*Macarthur*]

Lieutenant John Macarthur of the Corps, 340
coming to New South Wales, with wife and child . . .

five hundred pounds in debt for his commission
and household goods brought over. . . .

Nothing can keep
Macarthur down in his luck. His mind is keen,
thrifty and enterprising, born to success. . . .

Coming to New South Wales to better his fortunes,
better his fortunes he does . . .

discharging his debts . . .

rising to rank of Captain in the Corps,
Paymaster of the forces . . .

quarrelsome,
hot-headed by nature, turbulent of temper;
yet cool in calculation, steel-sharp of instinct,
taking the tide of Progress; ruthless, forceful,
ambitious; irresistible of purpose . . .

350

fighting a duel with William Paterson,
wounding his own commanding officer;
called out by Dr Balmain . . . and Foveaux . . .

Macarthur, first man of the Combination;
distiller of rum against the Government orders;
financial wizard, accumulating wealth;
shrewd speculator in rum and merchandise,
planning ahead and turning every occasion
to profit or source of profit . . .

360

securing merinos,
acquiring with them vision for the Future. . . .

Macarthur, thorn in the side of Government;
Macarthur, founder of a Nation's power
in warm and fleecy wonder of fine-grown wool . . .

declining scornfully the offer of King,
who wants him pacified, to make of him
Lieutenant-Governor of Norfolk Island. . . .

Macarthur, off to England for court-martial; 370
turning reproof to profit; coming back,
commission resigned, but bearing the right to choose
five thousand acres of land, wherever he likes
within the Colony, to pasture sheep;
bringing merinos from the Royal Stud.

Macarthur, moving his home from Parramatta;
taking possession, scouting every protest,
of country where the Government runs its stock. . . .

Macarthur, symbol of rebellion; leader 380
in deposition of Bligh, though seeming to stand
aside to let the Military do its work. . . .

Macarthur going to England for his trial;
eight years an exile, turning exile to profit;
writing instructions to his wife, concerning
the conduct of affairs on his estate;
arranging markets in London; preparing vines
for shipping all the way to New South Wales. . . .

Returning at last, loving the scenes of his struggles . . .
training his sons to further his work and cause. . . .

Macarthur, a man of wilful, selfish purpose, 390
believing his instincts right, believing opponents

unmitigated blackguards . . . nevertheless,
a man for admiration, a man to admire,
outstanding in rectitude of private life
when immorality was rife around him;
a man to honour for strength of mind and will;
a man to honour . . . scion of advance,
servant of progress, master pionéer.

[*Tasmanian Coastal Explorers*]

French navigator, Marion du Fresne,
comes after Tasman to Van Diemen's Land,
anchors his ships in Frederick Hendrik Bay;
and there the native islanders, resenting
the sailors' lewd attentions to their women,
send showers of stones and for the first time learn
death-dealing terrors of the barking musket. . . .

400

Now to the coast of the Isle of Mountains come
Furneaux and Cook and Bligh, and each believes
himself upon the mainland of New Holland —
Furneaux reporting that he could not find
evidence of a Strait. . . .

D'Entrecasteaux,
who named the Riviere du Nord, and Hayes,
renaming it the Derwent, both believe
Van Diemen's Land to be a mighty cape. . . .

410

George Bass, discovering Westernport. . . .

George Bass
and Matthew Flinders, circumnavigating

Van Diemen's Land, prove the flowing Strait.

Port Dalrymple to them seemed Paradise —

"a beautiful haven of Peace, where Nature is rife
with rare fecundity. The black swan quills
are strewn upon the beach in countless thousands. 420

The jutting rocks are covered with shell-fish. There
lie calm lagoons, the limpid waters crowded
with swan and other wild-fowl. Through the bush
the kangaroo bound, sleek and numerous.

Wild honey is there for taking. Pastures there
await the burden of stock."

Van Diemen's Land . . .

O Land of Promise! . . . O beautiful Isle of Mountains! . . .
Here is a prize, indeed, a prize ungrasped.

But D'Entrecasteaux and La Perouse and Baudin! . . .
French voyagers and French nomenclature 430
invade New Holland and Van Diemen's Land! —
Golfe Josephine and Terre Napoleon
and Riviere du Nord and Huon. . .

"Hurry!"

the English cry, "we must forestall the French . . ."

[*The System in Tasmania*]

*And now the horror of the Western World
gathers — on one huge murk of pain and fear,
with lightnings of torturing madness, thunders of grief,
floods of despair and hurricanes of hate —
to roll its terrible pandemonium
over the Isle of Mountains, spreading destruction, 440*

*rapine and murder, leaving in its wake
the shuddering, shivering rivers of sorrow that flow
ghastly through dreams of a beautiful isle forever.*

Lieutenant Bowen, at Risdon, does not know
bark makes good roofs for huts, sets convict women
to cutting grass for thatching. . . .

Bowen is young,
a boy with a man-size job, and much confused. . . .

The convicts give him trouble. Some abscond,
taking his whaleboat, meet a wretched fate. . . .

His soldiers fear a peaceful group of natives,
noisily driving a mob of kangaroo,
to be intent upon hostility;
panic, shooting them down, . . . women . . . and
children. . . .

450

Bowen conducts a soldier thief to Sydney,
deserting his post, deserving King's displeasure;
and Lieutenant-Colonel David Collins — failure
as colonizer at Port Phillip Bay,
leaving Sorrento after a bloody sojourn —
arrives at Risdon Cove in Bowen's absence,
transferring the settlement across the Derwent
to foot of lofty, snow-capped Wellington,
and superseding Bowen in command.

460

Lieutenant-Colonel William Paterson
settles at Yorktown, then at Launceston —
separate command for North Van Diemen's Land
till Hobart is proclaimed the capital
for all the Island, under Mad Tom Davey.

Mad Tom, the Governor of Van Diemen's Land,
comes first ashore in shirt-sleeves, calls for a drink.

He does not trouble his head about the morals 470
of his community, and Hobart Town
becomes a place which righteous folk abhor;
yet Davey is liked for easy-going ways.
Give him his due for geniality
and commonsense in his administration,
regarding freemen and the military.

Sealers and whalers are haunting Hobart Town.

Convicts escape to the bush, bushrangers there. . . .

So diabolical becomes the slaughter 480
of native folk by outlaw and by settler;
that they are harried to a swift extinction
by power of steel and lead and minds more brutal,
far more barbaric, than the stone age camp
could counterpose in its extreme of vengeance.

Christian establishment is nominal;
the System, with its soul of vicious crime,
extending beyond the convict to the settler,
is dominant, in old Van Diemen's Land;
and mortal selfishness exploits the time.

Inhuman crime and awful murk envelop 490
the Isle of Mountains. Drear Macquarie Harbour
accepts a dreadful toll of agony;
Port Arthur clutches wan and leering ghosts
that cannot leave it, though its stones may crumble.

Captain-General, Governor-in-Chief,
Lachlan Macquarie. . . . Now is the grey-eyed giant
touring the Colony of New South Wales,
soon after his arrival; taking stock
of large capacities of soil and people,
the white community of transportees — 500
convicts, men with tickets, emancipists —
and freemen, busy with farming, wool and commerce. . . .

Lachlan Macquarie, come to New South Wales
to repair administration, shape the course
of the Colony anew, for the poising future,
from aftermath of insurrection, treason. . . .

Swarthy of skin, grey-eyed, a giant in build,
a giant in personality . . . Macquarie. . . .

Him only compare with Phillip for achievement;
vested with mighty powers, applying them 510
with strength and imagination. . . . Lachlan Macquarie,
the man for the time, as Phillip was for his —
not starting as Phillip did from scratch, from nothing,
from less than nothing but for courageous heart;
but starting from foundations laid by Phillip
and the colourful host of individuals after;
starting from foundations firm if awry;
possessing a genius to straighten out
a myriad mazy problems; setting to work. . . .

Lachlan Macquarie, dismissing appointees 520
to office since the deposition of Bligh,
and reinstating those removed by Johnston . . .

erasing abuses of the Rum Reaction . . .

finding the Colony on verge of famine
from maladministration by officers
who followed selfish ends . . .

the public morals
as bad as ever they were. . . .

The public buildings
in state of dilapidation; roads and bridges
often impassable. . . .

Lachlan Macquarie,
essaying reforms in the System and its conduct; 530
opposing monopoly of needs of life;
importing grain from India; embarking
on useful public works of grand conception;
calling on gifted transportees to help him;
constructing a turnpike road for forty miles
from Sydney to Hawkesbury, with many bridges. . . .

Lachlan Macquarie, befriending Emancipists,
in strong disapprobation of the cleavage
of classes in a country of reform;
contending that a man who earns his pardon 540
should never be reminded of his past,
but urged to use his talents for advancement,
rewarded for rectitude in public service. . . .

The friend of convicts, having Emancipists
to table with him, championing their cause
against oppression by the proud Exclusives;
granting the lags their due, asseverating
the simple truth — “Why, from the very start,

Emancipists have aided settlement,
in its expansion, more than soldiers and freemen; 550
Emancipists have carried the burden of risk
and toil of whaling ventures, have cultivated
more land, and raised the greatest store of grain.
If once they erred, they now are pioneers,
with a firm, deep stake in the Country. They have rights,
the rights of freemen, when they win their pardons."

So Michael Massey Robinson, rogue bard
of early Sydney, the Reverend Henry Fulton
of rebel Ireland, Surgeon William Redfern 560
of Nore revolt, are favoured by Macquarie;
Simeon Lord is made a magistrate;
and Francis Howard Greenway, architect,
is brought to public service, building churches . . .
building the Barracks . . . raising a lofty vision,
too splendid for his times, of a city of beauty —
Sydney, beyond what Sydney is to be.

Macquarie, nation-builder, consolidator
of what is won, shaper of things to come;
agent of Progress, Health, Morality
and Culture — founding Schools and Hospitals, 570
Post Office and a roomy market place. . . .

This man has won the thanks, full-hearted blessing,
of all emancipists, and given convicts
better conditions, better barracks to live in. . . .
Humane he is, high-principled, and many
a freeman praises his work and character. . . .

Yet has he found relentless enemies,
some honest men, some scoundrels, all of them
persons whose hopes or views he has dismayed

by changeless purpose in far-reaching projects. 580

Marsden and Biggs and Bent strive hard against him,
shocked by his vigorous patronage of men
discredited before the Law of England.

If this be fault in Governor Macquarie,
it is a noble fault of generous mind,
offending most the privilege of class,
releasing and nourishing the best in those
whose self-respect endures the gravest hurts . . .

and History shouts abundant eulogy
for the wise and good Macquarie. . . .

New South Wales 590

grows, during his regime, from narrow prison
to a larger Colony, where trade and commerce
and local industry are rich and proven —
to a splendid pastoral Country, wherein freemen
win wondrous wealth of wool for English mills.

[*The Explorers*]

Blaxland, Lawson, Wentworth cross the Mountains —
the steep and rocky obstructions to many ventures —
by following the crests, outflanking sheer
sharp bastions blocking a way through inner gullies. . . .

The flocks move on the plains, move north and
south. . . . 600

Upon the wayback tracks of bold explorers —
Oxley, Hume and Hovell, Cunningham,
Mitchell, Macmillan, Sturt — the flocks of sheep

spread over Liverpool Plains and Darling Downs,
Australia Felix and beyond the Murray
to South Australia. . . .

How in the mind the deeds
of heroism of so long ago
blossom eternal to our Nation's pride —
the dragging of weary feet on burning earth
through stretch on stretch of unfamiliar scrub, 610
across the stony ridges, with water scarce;
the fording of heavy rivers; the lonely camping,
amid the perils of the vengeance-spears. . . .

Held in the mind, the obdurate endeavour
of our explorers lives, through episodes
that cannot fade . . .

as when, at Murray Mouth,
Sturt turns his boat for the long, long journey back,
he and his men, some convicts, bound in mateship,
weary before they start, with toil and heat.

The blaze of Sun on River aches in their eyes; 620
their hands are chafed and raw; and their muscles pain. . . .

All day they haul their heavy oars
against the running River,
the running River blocked by snags and sand-bars. . . .

Exhausted, wretched, they toil through their advance
by reach on reach of savage River-beauty,
white cliffs and ochre cliffs and shingly shores . . .

the massive redgums bending to the water . . .
the sun, in azure, smiting without mercy.

Bird-shout and colour-clamour of the dawn 630
offer them weary prospect till the night,
the bird-bright clamour of sundown finding them tired,
preparing camp, with faces turned away
from slanting rays of the round and golden sun. . . .

[*The Squatters*]

Free immigrants from England feel their minds
and hearts rebel against the prison confines;
attend the beckoning of new adventure,
promise of fortune far beyond the Mountains;
push, by slow stages, with their flocks and herds,
into the outback solitudes; establish 640
their huts and rough-built homesteads in bush-clearings
won to their purpose with sharp and flashing axes. . . .

They push beyond the fringe of settlement,
out of the Nineteen Counties, breaking the law;
find in forbidden lands the Promised Land,
there settle and make no compromise with ease —
the squatters, the pioneers, the men who take
Fortune to task and bend their backs to toil,
know vigorous manual labour from dawn till dark,
fell trees, hew logs, cut loads of saplings, build 650
rough homesteads — and, in building, wrench out roots
of the hard and bitter System from which they build;
using the convict shepherds, using the natives;
creating a class of freeman to be the soul
of colonial legislation, moulding the future.
These are the squatters, these are the pioneers,
young men and their women going into the wilds;
these are the life-explorers, facing hazards
not for months but years, the colonizers.

The fleecy flocks of sheep spread over the land 660
and multiply, making their owners rich —
the sturdy adventurous squatters, defying the law,
appropriating country, splitting logs,
building rough homesteads in unfamiliar places,
working with convict shepherds, convict drovers . . .
the hardy pioneers, settling the country,
bringing their wives and rearing families
in solitudes of the primaeval bush;
sending to town for stores but once a year;
contending with droughts and bushfires, hostile natives, 670
in lonely bush, through all the Colonies.

[*The Gold Rushes*]

Now is the time of Gold. Now is the time
when office stool and harvester are spurned,
and men must trudge and trundle the outback miles
to Bathurst, Ballarat and Bendigo,
to Bunninyong and Forest Creek and Turon.

This is the time of rough Democracy,
and cosmopolitan milling on the diggings
of men from every country where the news
of El Dorado travels.

This is the time 680

of night-fires in the gullies near the tents;
the sound of warning pistols in the dark;
the washing for gold in cradles at the creeks
from dawn till evening; and the digging, by pick
and shovel, of wounds in the earth for the blood of lust —
nuggets that trickle in fortune to some, or clot
to unreal fancies, mocking the dreams of others.

This is the time of murder for prizes buttoned
and belted about unwary wanderers;
the time of Gold Escorts . . . the time of Gold.

690

John Chinaman is here. He sticks to his kind,
does more than well by his industrious habits,
till other diggers bait him, tar and feather,
persecute; burn down his makeshift dwellings; break
his tawny skin with stones; harry him hence.

Eureka blazes a moment — bushfire quelled
in the heart of a stirring Nation, leaving a bright
remembrance printed indelibly on the minds
of people prizing freedom, honest dealing.

[Progress to Federation]

The convict days are a vicious nightmare over.
horizons are wide to the soul, and enterprise
leaps from days of gold with feet of freedom,
firm-paced in spite of inequalities.

700

The Colonies become Australian States,
where free communities are surely making
and striding stretching roads of nationhood.

The squatter is king on his runs.

The swagman swings,
with his lolloping gait, by a thousand shearing sheds,
billy in hand and swag on back.

The swagmen
meet at the cross-tracks and yarn the hours away;

710

and each demands his tribute from the squatter,
receives his tea and tucker from station stores,
whether there's work or not.

The drovers take
the sheep and cattle overland, long stages,
breaking the fences down to get at grass . . .

and talk on the roads is all against the squatter,
for basic human rights, democracy. . . .

The feud is bitter at times, the feud is bitter:
but the squatter holds his own, and the working men
consolidate their power.

There are shearers' strikes, 720
and strikes in the growing cities. The day of Unions,
the day of Labour, is coming . . .

and the rising tide
of popular feeling, startled for defence,
sweeps through the several States to join in one
grand stream of Federation, nationhood.

[Review of Colonization]

So many things were done to make this Nation,
from the settling of outcasts and the battering down
of virgin bush to the building up of towns,
accretions of cities . . . so many things were done
that only a tithe of a tithe may be recorded. 730

Imagination threads the noted names
of History to one continuous story,

leaving the most of Truth unannalled, marking
this name and that event, significant
of social trends, communities and epochs.

The names of navigators and explorers
bring to our minds the coasts, the lonely inland,
the rivers, mountains, valleys, of our Country.

The explorers ghost forever the ways they took. . . .

The Telegraph from Adelaide to Darwin
sings ever its overtones of History,
announcing the Present, acknowledging the Past.

740

Look where the Cities spread, solid and bright;
and they are proud and beautiful, hall-marked
with twentieth century modernity.
Papers are on the streets, wet from the press,
and aeroplanes are silver in the sky.

Oh, masterful White Men, see, in proud review,
your conquest of a Continent, your power
advancing, irresistible, everywhere,
surmounting all obstructions, pushing forward,
forward to work your will . . .

750

your power, your power —
upon the surf-beat coast, through hinterlands,
on plains and mountain-ranges, over rivers,
in scrublands, bushlands, tangling tropic jungles,
across the clay-pan and the gibber countries. . . .

See how your hardy settlements extend —
beginning, scattered and lonely, in solitudes
that lay vain siege to your unyielding hearts —

till, in a few decades, you have transformed
the wilderness, set up your populous cities,
your busy townships, crowned your strong endeavour
with grand reticulation of Industry. 760

Oh, dominant race of White Men, dominant Race,
deriving sun-ripe grain and fruit from earth,
gouging the coal and metal from deep down. . . .

The ships of the world come to your busy harbours. . . .

Oh, masterful White Men, know what you have won,
who claim a mighty Continent for your own.
You have won your title to its yield of wheat 770
and grapes and myriad fruits, of coal and oil
and gold and silver, and of bales of wool.
You have these things, possess them at the cost
of toil and hardship patiently endured. . . .

And yet attendant on your large achievements
are your terrible failures, your brand of blame, your souls'
dark perjury, your awful infamy.

Here in the Land of the South are your shining cities,
your vineyards and your rolling acres of wheat,
your herds of cattle and your flocks of sheep; 780
but here in the Land of the South are your blights —
erosion
extended to death of timber and death of soil,
your crimes, diseases, and your deeds of blood.

The few remaining Aborigines
sing their sad monodies beside the creeks . . .
hoof-desecrated sacred waterholes.

*The Lands of the Dreamtime now are cattle country;
the Lands of the Gods are over-run with sheep;
rabbits are eating the grasses from the hills
of sacred pilgrimage and Increase Rites. . . .* 790

*Jumbuck and bullocky destroy the grass,
destroy the waterholes;
the kangaroo and wombat go away. . . .*

*With axes, white men murder many trees;
the bushland birds fly off to other country.*

*The White Man's magic is stronger than our magic;
our Land is not our own,
and we are strangers on our hunting-grounds,
unwanted strangers at our sacred places.*

*The White Man's magic withers our opposition,
surmounting all obstructions, stopping at nothing.* 800

*The White Man's evil sickness strikes us down;
the White Man's teaching makes our youth despise us.
Now we are hunted like the kangaroo,
and we have no escape.
Despair is ours, and no desire to live.*

*Our hearts are like the drought-bestridden land,
empty and barren of succour;
we are sad for the small ones crying in the gunyahs.*

*The lubra nurses her birrablee on the slope
of the sunburnt hill, and feels that the hill is cold.* 810

We, the White Oppressors, are in control
of a Land whose Aborigines we murdered,
harried so swiftly to oblivion —
the Yantruwanta and the Warramunga,
the Narrinyeri, Weilpi, Dieri,
Ilpirra, Nyul-Nyul, Karadjeri, Bard,
and a hundred other Tribes, till there are left
only the vestiges of lovely people,
like Pintjintara and Aranda, studies
for anthropologists — with cameras,
notebooks and packing-cases — who collect
relics of native handwork for museums.

820

Conquerors, conquerors we, of Terra Australis.
Daily we throng and crowd. We take for granted
our conquest of this Country, yet have gained
but Lozier Bouvet's self-indulgent dream,
though by hard-rearing of cities, sweating the Land . . .
content, content, in selfish, foolish dreams,
so long as we drink unstinted wine of the Sun,
and cattle-trucks bring beasts to the abattoirs
and we can pocket our weekly envelopes.

830

[*Alcheringa Persists*]

*The Voice of Biami, resonant still,
speaks in the camps of the inland ranges,
under the stars, in corroboree chants;
speaks in calling of dawn-bright birds
that spear through leafy bushland branches.*

The Dreaming of Biami is a Dreaming vibrant

*with the timeless Bush and the wild things there,
and poignant with the sorrow and happy laughter
of nomad folk of Alcheringa.*

840

*The Dreaming of Biarni is deathless Dreaming;
the Dreaming goes on in spite of the holocaust
affronting Alcheringa from over the Sea;
the Dreaming is strong; the Dreaming is forever;
the Dreaming is music to swallow the discord.*

BOOK TWELVE

Discovery

[*Personal Passages*]

Discovery's hard and simple formula
is courage for understanding. Discovery
requires a growth of the mind, communicates
fresh comprehension only where mind is generous,
prepared for revelation, or endowed
with affinity for surprise, translating it
in a flash to familiarity with being.

I found the Great South Land when I was a child,
in the first bright wonder of being, before I knew
it was the Great South Land which I had found. 10
This part of Earth, this colour-blazing Land
is my identification, was given me
when I was a child and innocent of knowledge
beyond what was held in the heart and every nerve;
and, with the growth of the brain, the blessing and blight
of thought and daily planning and schemes for the future,
I have lost, regained, and lost, regained again
interminably the beauty of this Land,
this rich Australian life that feeds my blood
and is the essence of all my love and dream. 20

Who shall reject the stabbing beauty of childhood
awareness of life's strong beauty? Who shall reject
the forward-looking courage that childhood has,
when ignorance is wonder at Mystery
and thought is all to savour what is not known?
And, when the years instruct perception, shape
a mind's discrimination, who shall let
this more-than-predilection, this birth-pang sweetness,

this nascent passion breasting the waves of Being,
drown in the dark and drab of mundane things?

30

Childhood knows no dream that is not Truth,
which only primal strength may hold through life.
We waver, we fall, but, even as our flesh
yields up its spirit at last, our way is marked
in faith or betrayal of first good we knew.

And so I speak for myself
a little in this.

Coo-ee-ing my way down the stony years
to the city, remembering the hills,
scraps I have thrown to the world. 40
Some things I have withheld, some perhaps
I shall keep, as a prospector opals
in a knotted handkerchief, or a sick man sores,
hidden. But I shall speak now
of certain things, not too little, or too much, important.

I look back at sunlight on little roads
advancing in brief curves upward through trees
to the blue smiling sky; I know the sky,
from which comes warmth and light, in which
is the swift bright movement of birds. . . . 50
How well I know the bright birds, their whistling!
Oh, the parrots, hurtling red lightnings
through green hail of leaves,
the pouring of melody by magpies
into the young heart!

It is the young heart, forever and only,
that feels in the world;
all the joys and sorrows of Time have been

prerogative of the young heart.

Old men sob

60

in the midst of war's devastation,
their young hearts heaving their parchment breasts.
Antony and Cleopatra, for all
the man's experience, the woman's witchery,
were children at heart, their fiercest passion
elixir drunk from mature lip and loin
by child hearts rejoicing.

As a child I sensed dread in the fire of sundown,
and now I know it was beauty's going
and ignorance of beyond the bedroom blind,
the light gone, the trees invisible.

70

There was no terror in the full day,
in the twisted trees comradely shade-and-glitter
over the little roads; the world of bright birds
whistling back and forth, the twittering
unceasing in the scrub, the harsh happy laughter,
the rich hoarseness and casual cacophonous calling
hullo, or the urgent communication to the gullies,
of the kookaburras.

I take account of sorrow —

80

how I wandered close to earth for weeks,
flint and harsh colour gritting into sorrow,
while rock, imperative, instilled a strength
of stolid purpose in my mind and heart;
while dawns retched red the poisons of the spirit,
furnace noons burned on the lumpish mountains,
my instinct seeking
a numbness and a make-believe, a ground
on which to match malignancies of Fate —
myself identical with stone,

90

with moody mountains and with gibber plains,
dunes of burning sand whose coloured shapes
were wrought of arid winds, and tattered trees
that asked no mercy of the blistering sun. . . .

Yet splendid trees of sandy rivers threw
their shade to me, and under them I found
wished respite from
crow-shade of sunlight; under them I saw
the laughing picanninies play their games,
the youngest lubras, comely-bodied, slim,
with compact breasts and very pleasant faces,
chattering, laughing, eyes and teeth a-flash;
and wizened warriors sitting in their councils.

100

The crested cockatoos and vivid parrots
went hurrying through leaves to message bounds
of life outside the loneliness I knew.
Desiring to companion them, I spread
wings of a spirit shuddering in the dark.

Out of a chasmic gloom my dreams have flown
that piled the sunset on a thousand peaks
thence sped the colours that have fired the rocks;
thence flew the lories to the running creeks.
Out of the chasmic gloom where hid and beat
the broken heart of childhood, at my will,
came themes of beauty strong as I could bear;
came the forgotten people out of there. . . .

110

So this was my discovery — Australia,
the Land of friendly bush and mountain ranges
and far-extending plains and dunes of sand
and red-black gibber-lands and creeks and rivers . . .
and all these things are actual in my heart,

120

surviving the tread of the years, and more important
than all that I have gathered since in learning
conventions of clocks and city offices,
carrying with me my schoolmaster brain,
chockful of English kings and Shakespeare verse.
Always my thoughts return to this sprawl of coasts,
this vast warm Country of Alcheringa,
more real in my brain through all associations.

[*The Land's Rich Past*]

Australia, my Country, Country of our Nation, 130
is none the less the Country of the Past
that dies not in the Present or the Future,
whose Aborigines, though gone, remain
in the timeless Dreaming of the Land itself.

Is Twentieth Century Man so vastly wiser
than Stone Age Man who, in his ignorance
of the Theory of Relativity, yet lived
in Spiritual Relativity more true
than our lavish-blooded annals can reveal?

The company of clear-eyed Southern stars 140
turned nightly in the heavens, long ago,
over the Great South Land, whose fires burned,
darted and flickered by sea-shore, inland range,
by gidyea, eucalypt and casuarina,
a master constellation of the Spirit,
bespeaking the Secret Life, the earnest Totems,
the Brotherhood of Man and Bird and Beast
and Tree and Flower, and everything observed,
Water and Stone and Sacred Tjuringa,
the Wind, the Rain, the Sun, the Moon and Stars. . . . 150

Oh, bright white Mirrabooka, Southern Cross! —
juxtaposition of Man's mortality
and the timeless stars of heaven; the vital Spirit
of Man illumining a little of his dark,
and the over-riding Mystery of Space,
Time, Matter, Change and Destiny, unsolved. . . .

Dedicate the Past of all the World,
through grim and radiant quest, to the South Land's
beauty.

Brightly the surf-beat phantom, man-imagined,
beckons through Time, dazzles through History . . . 160
now here, now there, always gigantic, spreading
across a quarter of Earth, yet not becoming
the hard red ground beneath the feet, and not
spreading its definite beaches and cliffs to view,
aura'd in Mystery, laden with ghostly light,
blest with Utopian wonder in mind of the dreamer.

Dedicate to Terra Australis, Australia,
the lives of ordinary seamen, hauling ropes
and dropping anchors in a thousand ports;
the men who swabbed the decks, or lounged about 170
in ocean calm, and suffered and died of thirst
and hunger and scurvy. . . . Dedicate forever
the thoughts and fancies of geographers,
the failure and success of navigators.

Dedicate to Australia the deeds of men
who came from far without to conquer her. . . .

*All you ghosts that walk this Continent,
in agreeable, incompatible, jolly companies, or alone,
I call on you! Mark you inevitable
gathering of you together in my legend, as though a
tone*

180

*of the wind tonight spelled fortunate weather
and rare propitious circumstance for a summary
in reflective conference of the Past by you ghosts.
So you gather under my presiding,
for I have the imagination
to send my voice and my words riding
into the wind past moonlit wayback fence-posts
by which the dingo sneaks swiftly,
by which the cattle-dog will lift a leg
perhaps during the annual round-up of brumbies hiding 190
in the ochre hills;*

*I have the imagination
to summon you whence the moonlight spills
its pale floods of silence to swamp the dark recesses
of rock-ribbed ranges;*

*I summon you from the ways you knew
before Time brought the changes
that buried the dark girls with wild tresses
deep under the supersession of modern cities
and the same vast Australian blue;*

200

*I summon you all . . .
and out of the Past you come:
I hear the roll of the kettledrum,
and the Redcoats come marching,
and, hush! — here are the pities
and shamefulfulness of chains clanking
while the officers strut, swanking,
all throats parching.*

*In this Timeless Land,
all Time is alive forever.
Cook, in the "Endeavour",
comes upon Dutch and Portuguese
on the long, long eastern Coast,
and Chinese
and Japanese;
and many ships are sunk by storm and reef;
forlorn, in the hot sun and the grey rains,
their captains are there,
forgetting their own names.*

210

*The ghosts of Pieter Nuyts and Edward Eyre
the one with retinue of sailormen in clogs,
the other with faithful Wylie in the background,
must speak together, somewhere in the Bight.*

220

*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow are one
in the bushland and upon the arid lands,
where explorers and cattlemen converse together,
where the land-robbers and the crashed airman
awaken just a little to warm Alcheringa.*

[The Seals of Conquest]

*There is no doubt of the conquest. Look about
at the scintillating cities; comprehend
the continental web of rail-roads, airways;
consider the vast reticulation of roads,
bush-tracks, the thousands of bridges; note
unnumbered farms and stations; stand amazed
at the fair and scintillating cities — Oh, the fair
and scintillating cities of pride and power . . .
Sydney, the City of Thunder . . . Melbourne, lovely*

230

and green with its flower-bright suburbs . . . quiet Hobart
under the soaring beauty of Wellington, 240
mountain of strength and visited of snow . . .
Brisbane of burning sunlight, days of dream . . .
Adelaide, laughing between the hills and sea . . .
and Perth, the happy bride of the bluest water. . . .

Australia is ours. We are the Australian Nation.
But what is discovered, indeed — a place to settle
with houses and roads and cities and families,
transplanted from the Old World to the New,
in assertion of dominance? Is this, indeed,
discovery of the place, discovery? 250

Australia is more than this edifice, spectacle, founded
on native stone hewn from the convict quarries
and bricks baked in the kilns of Brickfield Hill;
is more than the Nation of confident mortals, sprung
from loins of transportees, emancipists,
exclusives and diggers-for-gold and diggers-with-guns;
is more than the picturesque and proud tradition
moulded and shaped from turgid and lurid beginnings
by sailors, explorers, cattlemen, boundary-riders,
soldiers, generals, scientists, artists, writers; 260
Australia is more than ever was put upon
the Continent that spreads within the South.

[*A New Tradition*]

Here is a new tradition, sprawling and high,
cemented and morticed with sorrow and toil and joy.

Think of slouch-hats and bayonet-victories,
bravery in jungles, convict skeletons,

the stories of gold, bales of the finest wool,
full silos of wheat, a written Constitution,
lock-outs and strikes, the Broken Hill Proprietary,
home-made Governors-General, and cricketer
Bradman. . . .

270

[*The Land's Own Character*]

But Australia is more than this, is more than us.
Take all our cities away, and Australia remains. . . .
Whisk all the white men and their story away
from scenes of their jubilation and desolation,
and still Australia remains . . . Oh, unperturbed,
lustrous and lovely, her Alcheringa.

Think of the distances — vast Nullarbor,
the journey from Broome to Melbourne, Perth to Cairns,
the straggling Divide, the long long Barrier Reef,
the miles and leagues of miles around the Coast — 280
Cape York to Darwin, Albany, Point Hicks,
Cape York again; with capes and bays and beaches
and ocean-fronting sand-dunes, cliffs and mangroves;
and the solitudinous spaces of the Inland,
waterless gibber plains of Oodnadatta,
the ridge on ridge of purple-scarped MacDonnells,
the sunset-flowering Flinders, and the great
and grey-green bushland roving hills and plains,
and the lush tenacious jungles of the North. . . .

Think of the heat and colour — ochre hills 290
glaring at noonday where the black crows cry
their echoless k-a-a-r k-a-a-r over the brilliant desert,
flamboyant waters of rivers aflame at dawn,
the sunset rampant above the western ranges

where trees blaze nightly, charring under stars
to ignite anew at daybreak, when the parrots,
galahs and budgerigahs spear them with barbs
of green and red and gold, hot light and colour.

This is the Land of colour, burning colour. . . .
See birds of flame, whose voices strike like flame — 300
green, golden, crimson birds, whose whistling, shrieking,
are colours in the brain; galahs and parrots,
rosellas, ringnecks, golden-shouldered beauties,
lories and lorikeets and parakeets,
corellas and lorilets . . . and cockatoos,
the sulphur-crested cockatoo, whose screeching
is gold-ore crushing for sunset, the red-tailed
black cockatoo, the wild-tongued red-faced gang-
gang . . .

and myriad burning birds . . . the firetail finch,
the turquoise wren, blue wren and lovely wren, 310
the chestnut-breasted shell-duck, spined-tailed swift,
the rare-hued wonga pigeon; honey-eaters
in fine varieties of red and yellow
and green and lustrous brown . . . the cassowary,
ungainly but beautiful, its neck a torch,
gold, red and emerald-blue; and brolga bearing
a light upon her head through all her dances.

And oh the reckless sound of wild-birds' calls,
filling the lonely bushland with delight!

Think of Nature's voices heard in birds, 320
beautiful birds, the parrots and cockatoos,
whistling and screeching the youth of this old Land;
the whip-bird, lyre-bird, filling dark fern gullies
with song as startling and superb as though
mere birds possessed the soul's divinest love;

and all the un-numbered little birds that hide
in branches, dawn and evening, and make loud
torrents of twittering harmony pour all
the sun-bright dreams of heaven down to earth. . . .

Purple mirbelia close-clings to the mountain; 330
the red bean trails its beauty on coastal sandstone;
the desert-pea spills blood on Central sands. . . .
And, see, the summer-flames of the bottlebrush!
Look where otelia floats on billabongs,
upon the light canoes of its own green leaves!

Here burn the honeyflowers . . . here native cherry . . .
here myriad wattles turn the hills to gold. . . .
Ah, spider orchids, and mosquito orchids!
Five-corner flowers and swamp flowers, bindi eyes!

Who seeks to number or name the Southland flowers 340
is caught in all dreams of colour and rich delight
wrought first in the dawn of the world for the early
people.

[*The Land's Own People*]

Sunrise and sunset have lost meaning for them.
The East and West, a-dazzle with bird and cloud,
and burdened, oh burdened, with colour-drench of air,
escape their notice, ruddy their limbs no more,
throw no more grace to their ordered wanderings,
acknowledge not now the dark rich soul of their eyes,
except as timeless Alcheringa dreams these things. . . .

Starlight, moonlight, broad noonday, continue 350
throughout the Land without them; leaves and boughs

are immobile observers, or confer
loudly, quietly, in light, dark, heat and cold,
on ancient camping-places, empty of people
or citied and changed by our less contented race.

The winds, the winds,
move over the Countries whence the Tribes have gone.
The Tribes have gone from Countries that they knew,
gone from the rivers and creeks and waterholes.
Plain and hill and valley know them no more. 360

Yet I cannot have
thought of this Land without them.
for me, this Land remembers the Vanished People.
There can be no gainsaying their rich, warm soul,
surging so strongly a man may feel it still.

They do not know the sunrise and sunset;
they do not know the bush, the sun, the stars;
but these know them;
all the powers of Nature yet remember
the Land's Own People, mourning them forever, 370
glorifying still their gentle lives.

Each dawn speaks of them in heroic manner,
hurling strong spears of light across the mountains,
and kindling a myriad fires on coastal sandhills.

The sundown surges with its memory of them,
sending its tides of colour
across the rolling bushland, far and wide,
fuming in subtle rehearsal of old fires.

Australia is the Timeless Land of Dreaming,
the Country of the Beginning of the world,
come from the time of rock-making. Australia
is the Country of the Dawn and of the Future.

380

Australia has been a Continent in the minds
of men who never saw her sprawling coasts,
and a Continent in the minds of men who trod
her dust beneath their feet, yet never knew her.

Not enough to conquer her bush, and cut
her vastness into paddocks, rape her earth;
not enough to fatten on her wealth,
and see no beauty, blind to the radiant soul
of this Land's Mystery, her Spirit's promise,
oldest Continent of the Imagination.

390

*Australia has been sought, and partly found,
for she is only gradually known. . . .
We who have cramped, or sought to cramp, her, learn
Australia is superb in our mistakes.*

*We are the cramped ones, who have failed to measure
to her vast glory with our little minds.*

She shall be ours as we are faithful to her.

*When we can love her as her own have loved her,
then shall we be her own, and she be ours,
and we shall be to to her as her Vanished People,
keeping their dreams and gentleness alive.*

400

*And, when we love this Land as the Early People
have loved this Land before us, we shall know
in us the Past lives on, the Past not only
of Viking ships and sailors going to England,*

*of Englishmen, of Britishers, advancing
to dominate the Earth and this great Land. . . .*

*In us the Past of this great Land shall live; 410
we shall take the dreams of the Early People to heart;
sunset, sunrise, shall burn within our blood;
our thoughts be strong and free as birds that fly
above the vast and grey-green bush at noon;
and we shall build into this Land's rich Legend
ourselves, our hearts; enter Alcheringa;
we shall be one with the Land and the Land with us.*

The sunlight comes to city offices,
in early days of Spring, from skies of blue,
and warms the littered desks and ordered files, 420
and turns the hair of typists into fire.
The sunlight strikes upon the shopping windows,
and warms the faces of the football crowds. . . .

[*The Grace of Ideals*]

All things whatever now are relevant —
dreams in the hearts of men, and shameful wrongs;
sun in primaeval forests, ages of ice,
triremes of Tyre, and driftwood on the water;
torrents and storms and rocks and silences;
a transitory glow upon a cloud;
grim caverns in the earth, comets that flare 430
across the heavens, Pyramids of Egypt,
fragmentary tablets, of old cuneiform,
battles and tourneys, and the night and day;
singing and dancing whether in ancient Athens,
with all the Gods of high Olympus near,
or viewed by cocktail swillers at Manhattan;

the thump of war-drums banged by savages;
long shrilling of railway engines in the night;
birds that veer towards the vivid sundown;
stories beside the campfire, told by greybeards. . . . 440

All things are relevant to the soul of Man,
all things in their conjunctions. The soul, in quest,
gathers the burden of experience,
knowledge of Life and Mystery of Dream,
posing the questions which, unanswered still,
must occupy the soul till end of Time,
Man ever looking forward, ever seeking —
indefatigable assailant of Unknowns.

Man, who has come from caves and steppes and jungles
to the large metropolis that touches heaven, 450
from hirsute nakedness to clothes of fashion,
from wind-borne sounds that filled the wilderness
to short-wave statements news-flashed round the world,
from harsh foot-tracks to highways through the
clouds. . . .

Man, who outfaces hallowed superstition,
and dares real peril with both body and soul,
who cannot segregate delight from sorrow,
success from failure, tragedy from triumph . . .

stands measured by ideals, the grace he has
towards them, and the force of his endeavour. 460

The Timeless Covenant

[The Mortal Moment]

*Stand, Man, on Earth, stand up on Earth and know
yourself a little, knowing the Stars know not
they are the Stars at all; knowing the Wind
knows not that it is blowing; knowing the sea
knows not it is the Sea to bless or murder;
knowing these thoughtless things, which have no care
and neither joy nor sorrow, shall outlast
your moment of vision demolishing itself,
expiring as it excels and proving Truth
poignant familiarity with riddles.*

10

The mortal moment leavens Time and Space
with meaning of itself, then disappears,
disintegrate of molecules that thought,
dreamt, wondered, loved and hated and aspired.

The mortal moment of immortal longing
expands, would crack the Universe, enslave
the Mighty God, grapple the core of impulse,
unravel the Riddle on the face of All Things.

Puny, and yet promethean, paradox
of human aspiration — first, the Earth,
with continents and islands, seas and skies,
brought well to purpose — an incredible conquest
for creatures wandering, naked and afraid,
primaeval jungles, steppes and glaciers!

20

Incredible conquest — for the flesh, the thought,
the visioning of Man to wrest themselves,

sublime, from furious cosmic furnaces:
body and mind, defining Mystery!

[*Questing*]

The Stone Age Man looked up and saw a cloud
go carrying sunlight over the purple mountain, 30
and all the world seemed suddenly aware
of singing in the cloud. . . . The Stone Age Man
saw stars drop glimmering light into the lake,
and beauty became a glory to be sought
forever through the mystery of dream. . . .

The Stone Age Man looked from his woman's eyes,
forgot the laughter of his children's limbs,
and, seeing a vision of an endless quest,
pursued the singing sunlight over the mountain, 40
plunged into shining regions of the dark. . . .

Through bitterness of toil and disillusion,
ruthless, he struggled — Man the Great Explorer,
fired by the fevers of hate and fervours of love,
bursting the bonds that held him, bursting the bonds,
yet chaffing still from old and new restraints. . . .

*Searching my heart, I know all this is true,
for I was the Stone Age Man, and so were you.*

Out of his heart — and ours — have come these things:
laughter and sadness, glory and degradation;
out of his heart and ours have come the peace 50
that blossoms in love and goodness, and the terrors
that blast and blight the promises of beauty.

Forever must the impulse of the heart
foretell the future of Man; and Man's first care
should be to study beginnings to guard the end.
For sure, in the heart of Man the Future is —
havens of beauty, and hells of hate and pain.

When the Bikini Bomb burst, we could note
the man-made horror of the God-made scene.

Unless we batten our devils into the dust, 60
the Bomb shall blossom, out of this dread season,
swift mushroom growths of horror, far more terrible
than blights that bloomed in the Bay of Graciosa
for pitiful Mendana long ago;
more shattering terrors shall crush our cities flat
than all the storms of Ocean brought in one
titanic fury, forcing the dragon junks
of brave Cheng Ho beneath the water-darkness.

Draw strength from the Past. Advance into the Future.
Combat, my friends, the popular fallacy 70
that what is done is finished, the Past is dead. . . .
The people milling in the city street
are not alone the things they take for granted.
They are the fight to death on the blood-marked snow;
they are the happy laughter of early Spring.

We are our ancestors and all they knew:
their thoughts and deeds are active in our blood;
and we are wrought to pulse of millenia,
perceiving the promise of our Destiny, 80
and daring it with hearts of love and fear.
The future of all is in the hearts of men,
the erring children of Nature, which teaches Truth.

[*The Timeless Land*]

Thought of my brain and force of my fingers come
from rocks afire in red Macdonnell sunsets.

The shining shoulders of men beside the Roper
bring me strong metaphor. The flashing birds
of Murray River daybreak lend me colours.

The stars above the bushland make my dreams.

No, not from me, from these, come the host of words
tumbled and fitted in lines to the beat of my heart. 90

I do my best to capture the timeless wonder,
but the stars above the bushland stare me out,
and I dare not look the giant Sun in the face;
yet I hold the beauty of this Land in my heart,
and so may all her sons and all her daughters,
one-souled with her radiant destiny.

The Great South Land is our part of Earth to make
particular source of beauty for ourselves
and comfort of Mankind. . . . The Great South Land,
where burn the bushland and the mountain-ridge 100
with blazing colours and with flames of birds.

The birds, flamboyant, crowd against the clouds.
Primaeval bushland yearns with dreams of youth.
Strong are the writen gum-boughs in the Sun.
Winds stir the branches and the strips of bark.

Great cliffs of ochre burn towards the sunset,
with living coals of red and yellow rock;
and sunset starts new bushfires of all colours,
raging through ragged tree-tops, conflagrations
that sweep the plains and swallow mountain-ranges, 110

leaving a guttering ember-world to fume
bright smoke to coloured clouds when day is gone,
then spread in warm, black mystery under stars . . .
clear Southern constellations, with the Cross
supreme of all, symbol of moving Time,
one with Eternity above this Land.

Keep with this Land our Timeless Covenant.

*Still cleaving close to cosmic origins
through all vicissitude, and paeaning
the vast symphonic continental theme
of Youth-with-Age and Age-with-Youth, the Land
calls mind to mystery and heart to knowledge.*

120

Sources

Study of the following items helped me in the writing of the poem:

Ashley-Montagu: *Coming into Being Among the Australian Aborigines.*

Barrett: *The Bunyip.*

Barrow (ed): *Cook's Voyages of Discovery.*

Beaglehole: *The Exploration of the Pacific.*

Breasted: *Ancient Times.*

Brown (ed): *Clyde Company Papers.*

Carrington: *Life of Captain Cook.*

Cayley: *What Bird is That?*

Clancy: *They Built a Nation.*

Collingridge: *The Discovery of Australia.*

Collingridge: *The First Discovery of Australia.*

Conigrave: *On the Bird-life of Houtman's Abrolhos.*

Crawford: *Ourselves and the Pacific.*

Dampier: *Voyages and Discoveries.*

Eldridge: *The Background of Eastern Sea Power.*

Elkin: *The Australian Aborigines.*

Ellis: *Lachlan Macquarie.*

Emmett: *A Short History of Tasmania.*

Enock: *The Conquest of Mexico.*

Fenner: *The First Discoverers of South Australia.*

Fenton: *A History of Tasmania.*

Gibson: *The Malay Peninsula and Archipelago.*

Glover: *The Ancient World.*

Goldsmith: *Treasure Lies Buried Here.*

Greenop: *Coast of Tragedy.*

Harris: *Wild Flowers of Australia.*

Howchin: *The Building of Australia*, 2 vols.

Howchin: *The Geology of South Australia.*

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 Stewart: *Shipwreck*.
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 Van Loon: *The Story of the Pacific*.
Walkabout, Australia's Geographic Magazine—December 1942,
 July 1943, August 1943.
 Wallace: *The Malay Archipelago*, 2 vols.
 Wells: *A Short History of the World*.
 West: *The History of Tasmania*.
 Winstedt: *Malaya and its History*.
 Woods (ed): *The Native Tribes of South Australia*.

Notes

OVERTURE

Geological allusions, and allusions to the development of Life, are intended, in the *Overture*, to signify occurrences upon the earth, and not specifically in the Australian region.

Line 40. Trilobite: A water-breathing arthropod (having "jointed feet"), with shell divided longitudinally into three lobes.
Cycad: Tree-fern.

Lines 56-64. These lines appeared, under the title of *Introspection*, in my *Memory of Hills* (1940).

Line 71. Archaeopteryx: "Ancient bird" — represents a strange mingling of bird and reptile. Like birds, it was fledged, with perfect feathers, at least on wings and tail, but it retained the teeth of the reptile, and its long tail was vertebrated." (Norton.)

Line 72. Dinosaur: "The Dinosaurs (terrible reptiles) are an extremely varied order which were masters of the land from the late Trias until the close of the Mezozoic era. Some were far larger than elephants, some were as small as cats; some walked on all fours, some were bipedal; some fed on the luxuriant tropical foliage, and others on the flesh of weaker reptiles." (Norton.).

Line 93. Alcheringa: The Aboriginal Dream-Time, time of Creation; the eternal spirit of that age abiding in the country.

BOOK ONE: BEFORE MAN

Geological allusions, and allusions to the development of Life, apply, in *Book One*, specifically to the Australian region

Lines 1-23. These lines were written at Rugby, S.A., in 1941, and reserved for incorporation into a long poem.

Line 22. Labyrinthodon: Described by Sir Douglas Mawson, at a lecture in 1934, as being a prehistoric frog-like creature, the size of a cow, which lived in the inland marshes of Australia.

Line 23. The Central (or Inland) Seas are referred to in several places in *Book One*. "The Continent of Australia, as a great land-mass, owes its existence to submergencies in the ocean, for it is under such circumstances that sedimentation takes place which becomes the prelude to the elevation of the sea-floor into newly-formed lands." (Howchin: *The Building of Australia*.) At various stages, parts of the interior of Australia were submerged under salt-water, which had inlet from the outer ocean; at other times, there were large fresh-water lakes of vast extent.

Line 34. Archaeozoic: "Beginning of life" — "The oldest rocks of the earth's crust form an intricate complex of sedimentary and volcanic rocks, crushed, crumpled and metamorphosed, and injected with dykes, bosses and other igneous intrusions. The base of the complex is nowhere to be seen. . . . So thick are the sediments . . . that the Archaeozoic era may well have been longer than all later geologic time." (Norton.)

Line 60. Tethys: Name for Greek mythology, applied to one of the primaeval oceans — "A great intercontinental or mediterranean sea, which spread over the greater part of the present Mediterranean Sea, overlapping North Africa and parts of Southern Europe. . . . An extension southward overflowed parts of the present Australian continent." (Howchin: *The Building of Australia*.)

Line 69. Gondwanaland: "From the uniformity of the vegetation, together with other points of resemblance . . . during the Permo-Carboniferous Period, it is concluded that India, Australia, South Africa and portions of South America, as now known, represent fragments of a former continent that was probably continuous, in an east and west direction, from South America to Australia. This hypothetically restored continent is generally known as Gondwanaland, named after the Gondwana district of India." (Howchin: *The Building of Australia*.)

Line 80. Erratic, moraine: Terms applied to rock transported and deposited by glacial action.

Line 101. Dykes, bathyliths: When lava intrudes in fissures across sedimentary strata and cools, it forms wall-like structures known as dykes. They are common in areas of the most ancient rocks which have been brought to light by erosion of the sedimentary rock around them. A bathylith is a very extensive horizontal area of igneous rock.

Line 126. Arthropoda: "Jointed feet" — Segmented animals,

some water-breathers, some air-breathers. The water-breathers — “crustacea” — are protected by a hard exterior, and include crabs and crayfish. There were monstrous primitive varieties.

Line 129. Ganoidei: “(Brilliant) a remarkable group of fishes, mostly extinct, which are distinguished by the possession of strong bony scales, coated with enamel.” (Howchin: *The Building of Australia*.)

Line 130. Crinoid: “Lily-like” — “Crinoids are rare at the present time, but they grew in great profusion in the warm Ordovician seas and for long ages thereafter. In many places the sea floor was beautiful with these graceful flower-like forms, as with fields of long-stemmed lilies.” (Norton.)

Line 134. “Dense thickets, like cane or bamboo brakes, were composed of *Calamites*, whose slender, jointed stems shot up to a height of forty feet, and at the joints bore slender branches set with whorls of leaves.” (Norton.)

Line 136. Lepidodendron: “or scale tree, was a gigantic club moss fifty feet high, spreading towards the top into stout branches, at whose ends were borne cone-shaped spore cases.” (Norton.)

Line 141. Cryptogamic: The Cryptogamic Flora was the typical flora of the Carboniferous Period, having developed during the preceding Devonian Period. It included *Calamites* and *Lepidodendron*.

Line 163. Glossopteris and Gangamopteris: Giant fern-like plants defined in lines 137-8.

Line 165. “Perhaps the most remarkable of all living trees is the *Ginkgo lobata*, which is the sole surviving member of an ancient order that has been reduced to a single species in a living state. It is so distinct from all other living trees that it is placed in an order by itself. . . . From the resemblance that its leaves bear to the ‘maiden-hair’ fern it has the popular name of maiden-hair tree.” (Howchin: *The Building of Australia*.) Howchin states the the Ginkgo is cultivated near Adelaide, that it is regarded today as native to China and Japan, and that no Ginkgos are known to be growing wild.

Line 170. Ceratodus: “The ancient air-breathing fish . . . still survives in Queensland rivers.” (Howchin: *The Geology of South Australia*.)

Line 181. Rhoetosaurus: “One of the vast number of ‘terrible lizards’ which have left their fossil bones in the rocks of Aus-

tralia." (Brammall: *Walkabout*, August 1943, article entitled *His Brain was in His Tail*.)

Line 190. Diprotodon and Euryzygoma: The Diprotodon was a wombat-like animal, "not only the largest of all marsupials, but . . . also one of the most plentiful, its remains being found throughout Australia. (Howchin: *The Geology of South Australia*.) *Euryzygoma* was another giant marsupial.

Line 192. Kronosaurus: "The mightiest swimming lizard of all time." (Brammall: *Walkabout*, July 1943, article entitled *The Horror of the Inland Sea*.)

Lines 173-199 are based on two *Walkabout* articles, by C. C. D. Brammall, of July 1943 and August 1943, entitled respectively *The Horror of the Inland Sea* and *His Brain was in His Tail*. In the first of these articles, the author says,

" . . . those able to read the Story of the Rocks can see Diprotodon and Euryzygoma pounding clumsily through the verdant inland of aeons ago . . ."

and, in the other, following a vivid account of a battle of giants,

"Great harmless, blundering, leaf-eating Rhoetosaurus was dead that a fiercer monster might live . . ."

Line 206. Reptiles with wings: "Flying reptiles. The atmosphere, which had hitherto been tenanted only by insects, was first conquered by the vertebrates in the Mesozoic. *Pterosaurs*, winged reptiles, whose whole organism was adapted for flight through the air, appeared in the Jurassic and passed off the stage of existence before the end of the Cretaceous. The bones were hollow, as are those of birds. The sternum, or breastbone, was given a keel for the attachment of wing muscles. The fifth finger, prodigiously lengthened, was turned backward to support a membrane which was attached to the body and extended to the base of the tail. The other fingers were free, and armed with sharp and delicate claws. . . . Birds. The earliest-known birds are found in the Jurassic, and during the remainder of the Mesozoic they contended with the flying reptiles for the empire of the air. The first feathered creatures were very different from the birds of today. Their characteristics prove them an offshoot of the dinosaur line of reptiles. *Archaeopteryx* (ancient bird) exhibits a strange mingling of bird and reptile." (Norton.). See also

note to *Line 71 of Overture*. "The earliest birds could almost be called reptiles clothed with feathers. . . . The early stages of differentiation by which a primitive reptile-like animal passed up into the bird are quite unknown to us, but is it almost certain that birds with feathers were not evolved from membrane-winged reptiles. The two classes may have had a common ancestral stock from which two lines of ever-increasing divergence proceeded, the one towards specialized reptilian life, and the other to specialized avian life; but in the case of birds this line cannot be found near its beginning, we have no knowledge of the genesis of quill feathers — in the first birds known to us the feathers are perfectly developed and quite typical." (Howchin: *The Building of Australia*.)

Lines 217-18. Mammals, monotremes, marsupials: "Mammals constitute the highest types of life in the Animal Kingdom. They are warm-blooded, usually hair-coated, have a larger brain capacity, and there exists a closer connection between mother and young in this division than is the case with any other vertebrates. It is in the last-named particular that the chief distinguishing feature of the class depends. With the exception of the lowest group (Monotremes), not only are the mammals viviparous, but there is a more vital connection between the offspring and mother, both before birth and afterwards, than exists in any other class of animals. The female parent 'mothers' the young. . . . Mammary glands in the maternal parent secrete a nourishing fluid by which the young is supported." (Howchin: *The Building of Australia*.) "These earliest of vertebrates which suckle their young were no bigger than young kittens. . . . During the long ages of the Mesozoic, mammals continued small and few, and were completely dominated by the reptiles. . . ." The lowliest mammals are "the *monotremes* and *marsupials*. The monotremes — such as the duckbill mole and spiny ant-eater of Australia — reproduce by means of eggs resembling those of reptiles; the marsupials, such as the possum and the kangaroo, bring forth their young alive, but in a very immature condition, and carry them for some time after birth in the marsupium, a pouch on the ventral side of the body." (Norton.)

Lines 230-53. In writing this passage, I referred to Harris: *Wild Flowers of Australia*, the *Introduction*. I have incorporated something of the following passage, with what may be an unscientific alteration, in *Lines 237-41*:

"The 'brush' or 'jungle' plants are those found in selected spots along the eastern coast from Cape York to Cape Otway, never extending for more than one hundred miles inland. . . . these plants demand a rich soil, a relatively high degree of moisture and of humidity. They are the relics of the first flowering plants which superseded the ferns and cycads in the days when conditions were more tropical."

Harris speaks of brush *or* jungle plants. I have assumed for my purpose that, besides being interchangeable, the words may be used together — if not in distinction then cumulatively — with regard to the growths intended. It seems to me that the two words give a better picture than one — but "or" in the verse here would constitute a full extra ounce of didacticism, something which, although unable to escape, I have felt it necessary to diminish where possible.

Line 379. Biamee, Kiama: Two Aboriginal names for the All-Father, conceived of by some Tribes as presiding over the fortunes of the people.

Line 380. Sky-heroes and Earth-heroes: Generally speaking, the Tribes of the eastern part of the continent believed that their ancestral heroes migrated into the sky, while those of the Western part regarded them as going into the earth.

BOOK TWO: THE ABORIGINES

Throughout the preparation of *Book Two*, I referred to an unpublished manuscript of my own, *The Aborigines and Settlement*, a precis of which, under the same title, was published overseas by the Department of Information, Canberra, in 1947. This manuscript was written over a period of years, and is based on the study of over a hundred books and pamphlets on the Aborigines, among the authors of which the following should be named as most influencing my attitudes in this poem: Spencer and Gillen, Elkin, Strehlow, Porteus, Ashley-Montagu, Wheeler, Parker, Taplin, Jones, Black, Smyth, Smith, Barrett, Harney, Mountford, Matthew.

Line 1. Dravidian: The Australian Aborigines and the Dravidians surviving in southern India belong to the same division of the human race, often called Australoid. Although the bulk of

this division exists today in Australia, the remnants in southern India are believed to be geographically nearer the source of Australoid peoples. It is thought that the Australians found their way here from India. In light of origin and antiquity, I consider the term Dravidian more correct than Australoid for denoting this division.

Line 3. Negritos: The Tasmanians were a Negrito people.

Line 15. Dreaming: Professor Elkin describes an Aborigine's "dreaming" as "his link with, and symbol of, the eternal dream-time; indeed, it is the name of his particular lodge, with its own rites, myths and totemic hero. The dreaming, however, is not the dream-time and the cult totem; the term is also applied to places sanctified by the doings of the great heroes, and in some cases by their discarded bodies. Some of these sites are the abodes of the life or spirits of natural species, and, in such cases, must be kept clean, and also the scene and centre of ceremonies designed to increase the natural species concerned."

Line 18. Lightning Brothers: Painted on rock-face, near Delamare, North Australia, are the Lightning Brothers — Yatchad-bulla, about twelve feet high, and Teabunji, less than six feet high. "The Wardaman believe that the Lightning Brothers still exist. During the wet season they stay at home — the Totemic Centre; in the dry season they go walkabout." (Barrett: *The Bunyip*.) *Rainbow Serpent:* On north Wessel Island is the Cave of the Serpent, Kaitchlan, "a snake with a forked tail, and a rainbow above his head. . . . The Wessel Islanders — there are few of them left — believe that Kaitchlan lives in the Sacred Lake, not very far from the Cave of the Serpent." (Barrett: *The Bunyip*.)

Line 18. Mootwingee: An area of rock-carvings in New South Wales, north of Broken Hill.

Line 19. Panaramittee: An area of rock-carvings in northern South Australia.

Line 21. Relic hands: Early settlers discovered the outlines of human hands on sandstone, made by using the hand as stencil and blowing powdered pigment on wet surface. Such stencilling has been found also in Victoria. Whether such relics have special symbolism is not known.

Line 25. Burial trees: Lindsay Black, in his pamphlet, *Burial Trees*, describes Taphoglyphs, burial trees, as those forms of Dendroglyphs (carved trees found at burial grounds). There

are outstanding examples in parts of New South Wales. *Bora-ground*: "The word Bora is from the Kamilaroi word 'Bor', signifying belt of manhood, and these (Bora) ceremonies were generally for the initiation of young men." (Black.) In various parts of Australia there may be distinguished particular areas of ground upon which the Aborigines carried out Bora, or corresponding, ceremonies. Such areas are sometimes marked by special arrangements of stones, by carved trees, or even on occasion by the condition of the ground itself, where generation upon generation of Aborigines carried out sacred dances. Frequently Boras were conducted when several Tribes were gathered together in one place.

Line 39. Wurly: Bark shelter.

Line 40. Millewa: One of the many Aboriginal names for the Murray River, which, of course, was referred to differently by different Tribes along its whole length. Millewa means "stars-in-the-water".

Lines 41-50. The names of particular Tribes mentioned in these lines belong to scattered parts of the continent.

Line 73. Lubra: Married woman.

Line 78. Quondong: The native peach.

Line 81. Nardoo: A native seed.

Lines 92-109. The story of Craitbull and his wife, who were known as the Buandiks, is taken from Smith: *The Booandik Tribe*; that of the Laughing Star from Parker: *The Euhalayî Tribe*; that of the Pmoara Flood from Strehlow: *Aranda Traditions*; and that of Kondole from Taplin: *The Narrinyeri*.

Line 118. Totem: "Totemism was a religious view of life, which bound the human community in a number of special and secret ways to the Tribal Country. By 'Totem' is to be understood, at one and the same time, a particular flesh-and-blood and a spiritual relationship, or Brotherhood, symbolized by the Totem Object. For example, the Kangaroo might be the Totem Object, in which case the Kangaroo Totemic Brotherhood would comprise the Kangaroo and those humans, other living creatures and inanimate things which were conceived to be 'one flesh' with the Kangaroo, and in whom and which the same impulse of Spirit was supposed to be manifest." (*The Aborigines and Settlement*.)

Line 123. Bunya: "In the Kabi country there are extensive scrubs, especially on the higher elevations, where there is a great variety of plant-life, one of the most beautiful and conspicuous

features being the graceful bunya tree. . . . The kernels in the flakes of the cones of this tree formed a palatable, nutritious and plentiful food supply, and when the fruit was in season, other tribes were attracted from immense distances." (Matthew: *Two Representative Tribes of Queensland*.)

Line 131. Increase rites: Seasonal ceremonies conducted by the Aborigines to induce the life-spirits of natural species to increase.

Line 196. Didgeridoo: A long hollow wooden tube, frequently bamboo, through which the Aborigine of the North will blow accompaniment to corroboree and chanting. It is a beating-time, which I can best describe as drone-and-boom.

Line 256. Dream-Time: The time of Alcheringa, of Creation, eternally associated with the Land; conceived here as particularly involving the period of Aboriginal occupation.

Line 389. The Sun is feminine in Aboriginal mythology, and the Moon masculine. Nightfall was explained by some Aranda people as the Sun's dropping of hair-string pendants over her face.

Line 394. Dream-Time: See note to line 93 of *Overture*.

BOOK THREE: ANTIQUITY

Lines 32 and 34. See note to lines 138-177.

Line 36. Necho: Pharaoh, about 600 B.C. See note to lines 109-41.

Line 59. Shalmanesa III became King of Assyria about 858 B.C. The annals of his reign were engraved on an obelisk of black marble at Calah.

Line 62. Ptolemy Philadelphus: 285-246 B.C.

Line 72. Pelusium: An ancient port of Egypt, which was situated about 20 miles to East of where Port Said now is.

Lines 109-41. T. C. Johnston wrote a book entitled *Did the Phoenicians Discover America?* Some of the evidence he adduces in support of his argument that they did, is impressive, especially with regard to cultural manifestations in the Pacific Islands and among the Aztecs; but many of his arguments appear shallow and to constitute special pleading. He accepts, without question, the tradition that Phoenician mariners circumnavigated Africa,

under the instructions of Necho. It has been argued, on the other hand, that the tradition is no more than a myth-transformation of the remarkable expedition of Hanno, about 500 B.C. Hanno appears to have voyaged beyond Sierra Leone to Cape Palmas.

Line 120. Pillars of Heracles (or Hercules): Straits of Gibraltar.

Lines 138-77. "During the middle ages, we shall see . . . the terrestrial paradise and the heavenly paradise placed according to the earlier Chaldean notions; and on the maps of this epoch, encircling the known world from the North Pole to the Equator, flows the Antic Ocean, which in the days of yore encircled the infernal regions. In the Ocean we find also Ea, the *Exalted Fish*." (Collingridge: *The Discovery of Australia*.) Collingridge quotes Ragozin's book on Chaldea: "According to Mr Francois Lenormant, the Shumiro-Accads had formed a very elaborate and clever idea of what they supposed the world to be like; they imagined it to have the shape of an inverted round boat or bowl, the thickness of which would represent the mixture of land and water (ki-a) which we call the crust of the earth, while the hollow beneath this inhabitable crust was fancied as a bottomless pit or abyss (ge), in which dwelt many powers. Above the convex surface of the earth (ki-a) spread the sky (ana), itself divided into two regions – the highest heaven or firmament . . . and the lower heaven, where the planets – a sort of resplendent animals, seven in number, of beneficent nature – wandered forever on their appointed path. To these were opposed seven evil demons, sometimes called *The Seven Fiery Phantoms*. But above all these, higher in rank and greater in power, is the Spirit (Zi) of heaven (ana), Zi-Ana, or, as often, simply Ana – *Heaven*. Between the lower heaven and the surface of the earth is the atmospheric region, the realm of Im or Mermer, the Wind . . . the earthly ocean . . . is fancied as a broad river, or watery rim, flowing all around the edge of the imaginary inverted bowl; in its waters dwells Ea, or the Exalted Fish, or on a magnificent ship, with which he travels round the earth, guarding and protecting it."

Line 185. ". . . the name of Synti bygd, which we are unable to explain." (Collingridge: *The Discovery of Australia*.)

Liner 188. Homer: From the internal evidence of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it appears that their author lived before the Dorian conquest.

Line 206. Hecataeus of Miletus: Greek historian and traveller (c. 550-476 B.C.). *Strabo:* Published writings about 17 A.D.

Lines 208-216. Theopompus of Chios studied rhetoric under Isocrates at Chios in the fourth century B.C. Aelian's *Varia Historia* (third century A.D.) records a discussion between Midas, the Phrygian, and Silenus, during the course of which Silenus told Midas: "Europe, Asia and Libya are islands which Oceanus flows round in a circle, and there is one real continent outside this group of land, which is boundless in extent. It produces other large creatures and men twice as large as those here, and living not our mere span of life, but twice as long. And there are many large cities and unique features in the people's way of life, while laws are opposite to those accepted here." (Notes supplied by R. G. Tanner.)

Line 217. Eratosthenes: Founder of scientific geography (b. 276 B.C.).

Line 218. Hipparchus: Founder of scientific astronomy (c 160-120 B.C.).

Line 220. "Aristotle . . . speaks of two segments of the *habitable* globe, one towards the north, the other towards the South Pole. . . . Aratus, Strabo and Geminus, have also handed down a similar opinion, that the torrid zone was occupied throughout its length by the ocean. . . ." (Major, quoted by Collingridge in *Discovery of Australia*.) Aristotle wrote in the fourth century B.C.

Line 232. Alexander the Great: 356-323 B.C.

Line 246. Megasthenes: Greek writer who lived in the third century B.C.

Line 247. Pomponius Mela: His *Geographia* was written about 45 A.D.

Line 248. Pliny: Wrote in the first century A.D.

Line 251. Ptolemy Alexandrinus: Wrote during the second century A.D.

Lines 274-87. Harbours of the Sun: Pomponius Mela, about 45 A.D., wrote: "Opposite India are those harbours which are called Solis, so uninhabitable that the heat of the surrounding air kills immediately those who land there." Mr Tanner gives reasons why the Harbours of the Sun might have referred, on the one hand, to the Andaman Islands, or, on the other, to the Australian coast between Broome and Wyndham. The expression, "Harbours of the Sun", caught my imagination on its own

account, and I have taken extreme liberty, reversing Mela's conception of such places. To me, indeed, in dealing with questions of uncertainty, supposition and rumour, the opportunity was irresistible to give the expression a meaning opposite to that originally intended in it. The phrase, in its English translation, seems inviting rather than fearful. Before the recorded discovery of Australia, rumour painted seductive, as well as forbidding, pictures of the continent.

BOOK FOUR: KALEIDOSCOPE

Line 25. Tu-te-gangi-marama: Heroic figure of Indian antiquity.

Line 56. Cimbrian Chersonesus: The Peninsula of Jutland.

Line 88. The Hanseatic League: A commercial association of Free German cities.

Line 125. Marco Polo: Venetian traveller of the Thirteenth Century, who reached the court of the Chinese Emperor, Kublai Khan.

Line 142. Nicoli di Conti: Another Italian traveller, who visited the East after Marco Polo.

Lines 169-210, and 275-9. My descriptive passages on the Polynesians are based on notes I made from the books of Stevenson, Keable, Melville and Van Loon, acknowledged under *Sources*.

Line 212. Hammurabi: King of Babylon about 2100 B.C.

Line 238. Tang Dynasty: 618-906 A.D.

Line 285. Here I have made use of Pomponius Mela's conception of the Harbours of the Sun, in so far as he says, "The soil is more like ash than earth." See note on *Harbours of the Sun*, lines 274-87, *Book Three*.

Lines 312-13. Tamarind trees from Malaya were growing on the northern coast before the advent of the white man, and provide one of the number of circumstantial proofs that Australia's north was visited by Malays and Javanese before white settlement. Matthew Flinders met a fleet from the north there during his circumnavigation of the continent. That Chinese fishermen penetrated the Barrier Reef before white settlement is clear from discoveries on the eastern coast.

Line 323. "Under the Imperial orders of the Chinese Emperor Yung Lo, Cheng Ho with a fleet of 62 'larger craft' sailed in 1420 from China with Ceylon as his destination." (Goldsmith.)

Line 340. "A.D. 1477 — there was presented to the new Emperor, Ying Tsung, a porcelain map." (Goldsmith.)

Lines 349-64. *Yamada Nagamasa*: "There are records of his piracies between 1628 and 1633 in the waters of Java, Philippines and Borneo, New Guinea and a place given in Japanese records as 'Seiyo'. This latter name is believed by research workers to refer to the northern shores of Queensland. Translation of the word 'Seiyo' in the texts of the Hojiki Temple in Japan gives it as 'The Great Southern Land', while the earlier Chinese record known as Liang Sha calls it 'Tsuyo', or 'The Coral Lands of the South'. In the Japanese records, mention is also made of 'Sei-tso', meaning 'The South Land of Pearls'." (Goldsmith.)

Line 392. *Cipangu*: Japan.

Line 398. The Land of Parrots, *Psittacorum Terra* or *Psitacorum Terra*. Collingridge, in *The Discovery of Australia*, says that, on "a mappamundi in gores of the date 1603, published at Lyons, in France, by Guiliemus Nicolai Belga," there is "set down . . . on the margin of the Australian Continent . . . the inscription . . . *Psitacorum Terra*."

Lines 429-456. This passage being intended as a climax to my treatment of rumour and supposition concerning the Great South Land, may be imagined (as I imagined in writing it) as the utterance of some weather-beaten salt, who, having sighted the colourful coast, is a changeling to his kin.

BOOK FIVE: THE PORTUGUESE

For *Book Five*, I made much use of Collingridge: *The Discovery of Australia*. In *Books Five to Ten*, I am considerably indebted to Beaglehole: *The Exploration of the Pacific* for guidance.

Line 154. *Doria and Vivaldi*: Two Genoese who attempted to reach the East by sea around Africa in 1291. Their fate is not known.

Line 180. *Sir John Mandeville*: Wrote, in about 1370, a spurious account of his *Travels* in the East.

Line 182. *Prester John*: A fabulous Eastern potentate, in whose existence many believed at the opening of the Iberian Age.

Line 186. *Byzantium*: Constantinople. The Turks captured it in 1453.

Line 205. *Prince Hentry the Navigator*: 1394-1460.

Line 248. Fra Mauro's Mappamundi: A famous early map of the world. Many of the early maps are reproduced in Collingridge's books.

Line 252. Cavo di Diab: Arabic name.

Line 258. "As Cape Lopo Gonsalves, now Cape Lopez, was the first locality, south of the equator, to have a geographical name attached to it, it may fairly be inferred that this was the name of the navigator who first crossed the line." (Major: *Prince Henry the Navigator*, quoted in Collingridge: *The Discovery of Australia*.)

Line 263. Diogo Cam made his voyage in 1484.

Line 283. Pedro de Covilha: Set out in 1487.

Line 302. Bartholomeu Dias: Discovered the Cape in 1487.

Line 362. Vasco da Gama: Reached India in 1497.

Line 381. Albuquerque: In 1511, conquered Malacca and founded the Portuguese empire in the "Far East".

Line 386. The Bull of Pope Calixtus: Pope Calixtus III (1455-8) decreed the division of the world in Spanish and Portuguese hemispheres.

Moghal: Term applied to the Mohammedan empire in India. The emperors of Delhi were the Great Moghals.

Lines 403-65. In writing these passages concerning the Indian seas, the Malays, and the Portuguese conquerors, I referred particularly to Osborn: *My Journal in Malayan Waters*; Wallace: *The Malay Archipelago*; and Panikkar: *India and the Indian Ocean*; and I also gained some ideas of the Malayan scene and the Hindu Millenium from Gibson: *The Malay Peninsula and Archipelago*; and Winstedt: *Malaya and its History*.

Line 484. Loac Provincia: In the Hunt-Lennox Globe — A.D. 1506-11 — "The western coasts of Australia bear an inscription which appears for the first time in the southern hemisphere. *Loac Provincia* is the inscription we refer to." (Collingridge: *The Discovery of Australia*.)

BOOK SIX: THE SPANIARDS

Line 1. Columbus: Voyage to American waters, 1492

Line 6. Terra Firma: Name accorded to South America in those times.

Line 10. Balboa: Settled the colony of Santa Maria in the Gulf of Darien, 1513.

Line 29. Hernando Cortez: First reached Mexico in 1519.

Line 36. Tenoxtica or Tenochtitlan: My description of this city is based upon the *Introduction* by M. Hume to Enock: *The Conquest of Mexico*.

Line 47. Francisco Pizarro: Crossed the Andes and began the conquest of Peru, in 1532.

Line 59. Caxamalca: The modern Caxamarca. My whole account of Pizarro is based closely upon Prescott's, and in *lines 60-4* I have adapted the following: "Below the adventurers, with its white houses glittering in the sun, lay the little city of Caxamalca, like a sparkling gem on the skirts of the sierra." "The land, intersected with verdant hedgerows, was chequered with patches of various cultivation."

Line 64. The Inca: The sacred ruler of the Incas, or Peruvian people.

Lines 78-84. Pachacamac, Xauxo, Cuzco: Inca cities.

Line 86. Maya People: The natives of the Yucatan Peninsula.

Line 95. Ferdinand Magellan: Began his great voyage in 1519.

Line 139. Todos los Santos: The Straits of Magellan.

Line 145. Cabo Deseado: The last cape in the Straits, beyond which lay the Pacific Ocean.

Lines 149-50. Maximilianus Transylvanus, present at Court when the survivors of Magellan's expedition reported to the Emperor at Valladolid, wrote a famous letter to his father, the Cardinal of Salzburg, giving an account of the expedition. In this letter he spoke of "a sea so vast that the human mind can scarcely grasp it." (Collingridge.)

Lines 152-6. These lines are based on Reisenberg. The Pacific is "larger than all the dry lands of the earth put together", and its basin is "surrounded by volcanic peaks, scoured deep by great submarine ravines". Reisenberg quotes Joseph Conrad: "white locks give to the sea in a gale an appearance of hoary age."

Line 228. St. Lazarus: The Philippines.

Line 280. Loaysa: Expedition to the Moluccas, 1526.

Lines 297-301. Meneses: A Portuguese, discovered New Guinea in 1526. *Saavedra:* Sailed along New Guinea coast in 1528. *Grijalva:* murdered by his crew at one of the islands on the north coast of New Guinea in 1537. Grijalva was searching for equatorial islands believed to abound in gold, and I have applied the name *Golden*

Islands to signify that it was one of the fabulous conceptions so plentiful at the time.

Line 303. Miguel Lopez de Legaspe: Founded the Philippine settlement in 1565.

Line 330. Mendana: His first expedition was authorized in 1567.

Line 357. "Guadalcanal was left to its ashes and memories of blood." (Beaglehole.)

Line 369. Mu: "Mystical theorists have tried to find a counterpart of Atlantis in the lost continent of Mu, which they place in the middle of the Pacific." (Reisenberg.)

Lines 384-9. "Meanwhile about the quays and taverns of Callao, the Port of the City of Kings, and the Pacific seaboard of South America, rumours began to pass from ear to ear; and stories of the gold clubs of Ramos, and of the golden river-beds of Guadalcanal, became the common talk. (Beaglehole.) Of the clubs, Beaglehole says: "The brigantine crossed to Malaita, where the soldiers were much excited by the native clubs — short weapons ending in a heavy knob. They thought that here was gold . . . till Henriquiz . . . broke them . . . only iron pyrites mixed with stone."

Line 390. Terra Australis Incognita: The Unknown South Land.

Lines 421-4. "Mendana could not rest. He had made a great voyage and discovered an archipelago that stretched across the ocean for 600 miles — surely if not a continent the outposts of one." (Beaglehole.)

Line 435. Mendana's second expedition left Callao in 1595.

Lines 459-60. "The Camp Master came out from his breakfast unarmed; finding himself among enemies, he called for his dagger and sword, but, at a signal from Mendana, he was stabbed before he could move." (Beaglehole.)

Lines 461-2. "Mendana's men went about with drawn swords like lunatics, shouting, 'Long live the King! Death to traitors!'" (Beaglehole.)

Lines 463-4. ". . . a general massacre. . . . Another boat was seen approaching from the ship. In it stood the Vicar, a lance in hand, and the crew shouting, 'Death to Traitors!'" (Lloyd.)

Lines 475-7. "A sickness fell upon the Spaniards, a curse from heaven. Mendana fell seriously ill and Don Lorenzo was made acting Captain General. Men died like poisoned rats. . . . On Nov. 18 they left Santa Cruz, "in the claws of the devil", and the

sick and dying on board the escaping ships called it 'the corner of hell'." (Reisenberg.)

Lines 480-5. "Quiros, on whose shoulders now fell the whole responsibility, knew nothing about these seas, and this guideless voyage to the Philippines against contrary winds, in rotten ships with a starving and dying company, must rank as one of the greatest feats in the record of Pacific journeyings." (Beaglehole.)

Lines 553-884. These pages have been refurbished from a long, unpublished verse narrative which I wrote in 1930, *Quiros and Torres*. My references, I remember, were Scott's *Short History of Australia* and the extract from Major in Strang's *In Search of the Southland*. The concluding lines of *Book Six* — lines 868-884 — were published in my *Unknown Land* (1942).

Lines 562, 3, 5. *Capitana*: Flagship. *Almiranta*: Ship of second-in-command. *Zabra*: Small launch.

BOOK SEVEN: THE DUTCH

Lines 27-35. *Linschoten*: Returned to Holland in 1591, and published, 1595-6, accounts of his travels.

Lines 41-3. *Houtman and Van Neek*: Dutch traders and treasure-seekers.

Line 72. *De Noort*: First Dutch circumnavigator.

Line 74. *Dirck Gerritz*: "He sighted what we call the South Shetlands, but what he thought were the snowy peaks of 'the great Zuidland'. He was captured by the Spaniards." (Lloyd.)

Line 88. *Schouten and Le Maire*: Sailed for the Pacific in 1615.

Line 90. *Le Maire* had faith that the expedition would find the Great South Land by pursuing a westward course from the region they were in, between the Fiji and Solomon groups; but, owing to *Schouten's* insistence, they went northwards.

Line 199. *Janszoon*: Voyage in the *Duyfken*, 1606.

Line 283. *Carstensz*: Sailed from Amboyna, with *Arnhem* and *Pera*, 1623.

Line 345. Made the shorter route to Java in 1611.

Line 363. *Hartog*: Came to the Australian coast, 1618.

Line 380. This line celebrates the titles of two Australian books, *Behold New Holland* (which I have not read) and *Land Looking West*.

- Line 466. Zeewulf:* Reached Australian coast, 1618.
Line 473. Houtman: Reached Australian coast, 1619.
Line 510. Pelsart: Wrecked on the Abrolhos, 1629.
Line 535. Cornelis: Leader of the mutineers.
Line 563. Loos and de Bye: Later Dutch sailors kept an eye open for these men, but no trace was ever found of them.
Line 621. Vergulde Draeck: Wrecked on the coast, 1656.
Line 629. Leeuwin: Coasted south-western Australia, 1622.
Line 646. Van Diemen: Became Governor-General of the East Indies in 1636.
Line 649. Coen: Predecessor of Van Diemen as Governor-General; enterprising and great administrator.
Line 674. Pool: Sailed, in 1636, for the region visited by Carstensch.
Line 680. Visscher: His *Memoir concerning the Discovery of the South-land* (1642) formed the basis of instructions given to Tasman.
Line 705. Tasman: Sailed on his long voyage in 1642.

BOOK EIGHT: THE FRENCH AND THE ENGLISH

- Line 1. De Gonneville:* His discovery was claimed to have been made early in the Sixteenth Century. In 1663 his grandson published an account of it.
Line 6. Ortelius' Mappamundi: Map of the world, published in 1570.
Line 90. My account of Drake is based upon Reisenberg's.
Line 206. Cavendish: Reached the Pacific in 1586.
Line 213. Hawkins: Reached the Pacific in 1593.
Lines 231-268. These lines were published in my *Come Walk-about* (1949).
Line 357. Cygnet: Reached Buccaneer Archipelago, north-west coast, in 1688.
Lines 364-404. Statements attributed to Dampier are based on his own accounts.
Lines 484. Roebuck: Reached the north-west coast in 1699.

BOOK NINE: THE FRENCH AND THE ENGLISH

Line 1. Purry: "In 1717 and 1718 addressed to his masters two memorials urging the colonization of Pieter Nuyts Land." (Beaglehole.)

Line 71. Roggeveen: Sailed from Texel for the Pacific in 1721.

Line 102. Bouvet: On New Year's Day, 1739, sighted the Cape of the Circumcision.

Line 176. Anson: Sailed for the Pacific in 1740.

Line 208. John Campbell: Edited, 1744-8, a new edition of Harris's collection of *Voyages* . . . "fervid patriot and moralist." (Beaglehole.)

Line 242. De Broses: His *Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australis* appeared in 1756.

Line 310. John Byron: Sailed for the Pacific in 1764.

Line 328. Callander: Published his *Terra Australis Cognita*, in three volumes, the first appearing in 1766.

Line 355. Dalrymple: Returned to England from the East Indies in 1765.

Line 481. Wallis and Cartaret: Left Plymouth Sound for the Pacific in 1766.

Line 499. Davis Land: One of the fabulous portions of the Great South Land.

Line 515. Bougainville: Sailed for the Pacific in 1766.

BOOK TEN: CAPTAIN COOK

Line 204. Kuringai: Peoples of the Coast.

Lines 227-30. These lines express a tradition of the landing.

Lines 245-81. Statements attributed to Cook and Banks concerning the natives are based upon their own accounts.

Lines 284-424. The Aborigines' view of the landing.

Line 314. The Australian Aborigines were high-minded in their ethics, and had a fine code of etiquette. Upon native ethics and etiquette the white man has trampled from the first, and all along the line.

Line 323. Givea: Cape Solander.

Line 345. The Aborigines had a useful and expressive sign-language, upon which, on certain ritual occasions when speech

was prohibited, they had to rely entirely for communication. The gestures of the intruders would appear infantile to them.

Lines 385-8. This is a reply to Banks' charge that the natives were cowards. Native conduct, in the unprecedented circumstances of white visitation, would be guided by the Councils of Old Men. Cook expressed a higher opinion of the natives than did Banks.

Lines 427-47. These lines are a further attempt to give the counterblast of Aboriginal viewpoint to the attitude of Sir Joseph Banks.

BOOK ELEVEN: INVASION

Line 22. Yhi: An Aboriginal name for the Sun. See note to line 389 of *Book Two*.

Line 183. Grose: Commandant of the New South Wales Corps, who ruled after Governor Phillip left the Colony in 1792.

Line 184. Paterson: Succeeded Grose, during the Interregnum; in 1894 he founded York Town, Van Diemen's Land, later moving the settlement to Launceston. *Macarthur:* An officer of the Corps, prominent in the Rum Monopoly, pioneer in the wool industry, and leader in the plot against Bligh.

Line 185. Johnston: Commandant of the New South Wales Corps, who officiated in the deposition of Bligh, and acted as Lieutenant-Governor until relieved of his command.

Lines 244-6. Collins: Judge-Advocate and Colonial Secretary under Phillip; author of *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* (1798); made an abortive attempt to form a settlement at Sorrento, Port Phillip, 1803; first Governor of Van Diemen's Land, where, in 1804, he founded Hobart. *Hunter:* Arrived with Phillip in the First Fleet; became the second Governor, following the Interregnum, in 1795. *Tench:* A Captain-lieutenant of the marines in the First Fleet; published, in 1789, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*. *King:* Arrived with the First Fleet, under Phillip; became commandant at Norfolk Island; succeeded Hunter as Governor of New South Wales in 1800. *Reiby:* Ship's officer on the *Royal Admiral*, transporting women convicts to New South Wales; he married one of them, Mary Haydock, horse-thief, and she conducted his commercial interests in the Colony, amassing a fortune. *Daniel Cooper:*

Leading merchant in early Sydney. *Robert Campbell*: Leading merchant and trader. *Barrington*: "The Prince of Pickpockets." *Greenway*: Governor Macquarie's architect, transported for forgery.

Line 249. Exclusives: The wealthy free community. *Eman- cipists*: Transportees whose sentences had expired. *Lags*: Term applied to transportees.

Line 274-86. The picture referred to in this account of Mary Reiby I saw in Clancy's *They Built a Nation*.

Line 287. Towri: Hunting grounds.

Line 299. John Company: The East India Company, whose management held great political influence when New South Wales was founded, and sought to suppress trade developments in the new Colony. Company power was soon defeated by the lusty enterprise of the Colony.

Line 300. Lord: A transportee who became a leading Sydney merchant.

Line 312. Terry: A transportee who became a leading merchant.

Line 321. Meehan and Underwood: Transportees who became successful citizens.

Line 399. Du Fresne: Visited Van Diemen's Land, 1772.

Line 410. D'Entrecasteaux: Arrived Van Diemen's Land, 1792.

Lines 418-26. Adaptation of official report.

Line 429. La Perouse: In Australian waters, 1788. *Baudin*: On Van Diemen's Land coast, 1802.

Line 444. Bowen: Formed settlement at Risdon Cove, 1803. Collins superseded him, and founded the main settlement at Hobart.

Line 467. Davey: Governor at Hobart, in succession to Collins.

Line 491. Macquarie Harbour: Grimmiest of Australian penal settlements, instituted by Governor Sorrell for the most incorrigible convicts, at the end of 1821.

Line 495. Macquarie: Governor of New South Wales, 1810-21.

Line 581. Among the enemies of Macquarie were notable men, including the *Rev. Samuel Marsden*, early clergyman in New South Wales and missionary to New Zealand; *J. T. Bigge*, who arrived in Sydney as a commissioner to investigate the state of the Colony, in 1819; and *J. H. Bent*, first judge in Australia.

Line 596. Blue Mountains crossed, 1813.

Line 617. Sturt's Murray journey, 1829.

222 59
Line 672. Edward Hargreaves' discovery of gold at Bathurst, 1851, began the period of the Gold-rushes.

Line 691. Chinese poured into Australia during the rushes. There were 42,000 of them on Victorian diggings alone.

Line 696. *Eureka Rebellion*: 1854.

Line 725. Australian Federation realized 1 January 1901.

Lines 789-810. An attempt to give something of the native view of settlement.

Lines 811-19. Tribes named from various parts of the continent.

BOOK TWELVE: DISCOVERY

Lines 177-208. These lines were written at Rugby, South Australia, in 1941.

Line 209. Celebrating the title of a significant Australian novel, *The Timeless Land*.

Line 220. See *Book Seven*, lines 630-8. *Eyre*: Explorer who, in 1841, made a fantastic dash from Port Augusta to Perth.

Line 222. *Wylie*: Faithful native companion of Eyre.

THE TIMELESS COVENANT

Line 121. Australia has frequently been called the new-old land.